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Courtnay's Strange Will

Or, A WOMAN'S FAITH

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CHAPTER I.

A FELLOW FEELING.

JOHN WEATHERBY lay dying in a rough cabin in a California mining camp. He was a tall, gaunt man, about forty-five years of age, with somber blue eyes and prematurely white hair—a reticent, moody man who held himself aloof from the other men in the camp, making an exception only in Andrew Courtnay, who had the claim next to his. From the first the two men had been drawn together by some subtle bond of sympathy and they became friends.

Courtnay had been in the California gold region for thirteen years. He had been very lucky, striking it rich from the very first. Weatherby had joined the camp and taken up a claim about a year previous. He had found but little gold, however. Luck seemed dead against him. No one, not even his friend, Andrew Courtnay, ever heard him complain of his ill luck. Courtnay believed from the first that Weatherby's life had been embittered by some great sorrow which had rendered him almost indifferent to whatever an unkind Fate might still have in store for him.

He had been stricken with typhoid fever. Courtnay nursed him faithfully; but Weatherby, weary of life, made little struggle against the disease that had him in its grip. He had grown steadily weaker, until life was only a question of a few hours.

Andrew Courtnay sat by the bunk in which the dying man lay. He was two years older than Weatherby, tall and sinewy, with dark, grizzled hair and beard, grave blue eyes and a firm mouth. A man of great will power and tenacity of purpose, who usually accomplished anything on which he had set his mind, he had failed to win the one thing he desired above all else—the woman he loved.

The Courtnays were an old, blue-blooded Maryland family, whose ancestral home was Courtnay Manor, a Colonial homestead on the Chesapeake Bay. Andrew Courtnay and his brother, Oscar, both fell in love with the same girl, Estelle Ward, who, with her widowed mother, was in the habit of spending the summers at Chesterton, the town about half a mile from Courtnay Manor. Oscar, a handsome, fascinating fellow, won without effort the girl Andrew loved with the one love of his life.

When Andrew learned of his brother's engagement to Estelle, he left Courtnay Manor and started for the West. He went to the gold fields. He had no great desire for money, but he wanted an object in life, something for which to live. He prospered, rapidly accumulating a fortune.

When he went away from home, his family had consisted of his brother Oscar, and one sister married to a lawyer in Chesterton. He had held no communication with either of them during the thirteen years that had elapsed.

"I am dying, Courtnay," John Weatherby said, quietly, turning his pale face toward the man who sat beside him.

Andrew Courtnay gravely bent his head.

"I shall be very lonely without you, John," he declared. "We have been good friends and comrades."

"That is true," murmured Weatherby. He paused a moment, then added, "I am going to make a strong appeal to your friendship." Courtnay inclined his head without speaking and waited for Weatherby to continue. He lay silent for a little while, then he sighed and spoke: "I have two children, two little girls—Ruth aged ten and Helene aged four. The elder is motherless, the younger worse than motherless. My death will leave them unprovided for. There is no one to whom I can appeal in their behalf save you."

"Give yourself no further concern in regard to the future welfare of your children. That shall be my care," Courtnay assured him.

"God bless you!" murmured Weatherby, with great earnestness. "I can now die in peace. I will explain what I meant when I said that my little daughter Helene was worse than motherless. I have been married twice. My first wife, Ruth's mother, was a good, true woman. The five years that we spent together were peaceful and happy—then she died. I loved my wife and grieved for her sincerely. Then Clarice Le Roy came into my life, and I went mad about her. She was the daughter of a dancing master, a gold-haired, pink-cheeked, butterfly creature with the blue, innocent eyes of a child and the heart of a wanton. When she consented to marry me I was crazed with joy. But that joy was short-lived. I soon learned that she did not love me. I was prosperous at that time, and she was tired of the sordid, struggling life she led with her father. Before two years had passed she had ruined me financially with her extravagance, and then brought dishonor upon me. She ran away with the manager of a theatrical company, whom she had only known a week, deserting her child, a baby a year old. I have never seen or heard of her since. I procured a divorce, hoping that the man would marry her. Whether he did or not I do not know. Little Helene closely resembles her physically. God forbid that she should be like her mentally and morally. It were better she were dead. Unworthy as her mother was, I loved her madly. My life was ruined. I could find no comfort even in my poor little children." He paused, sighing wearily.

"I understand how you must have suffered," murmured Courtnay, sympathetically. "I think it must have been a fellow feeling that drew us together. My life has been spoiled by my love for a woman." As Weatherby looked at him questioningly, he added, "She was a pure, good woman, but she loved some one else. Now tell me where to find your little girls."

"They are living in a small town on the New England coast called Sea Isle, with a woman named Jane Darnley, a distant connection of my first wife," Weatherby explained. "I have no fears for the future of my elder daughter, Ruth," he continued. "Her mother was a good woman. But Helene has her mother's blood in her veins, wanton, treacherous blood. God knows what her life will be. She may bring sorrow and, perhaps, shame upon all who care for her." He looked in a troubled way at Courtnay. "The day may come when you will bitterly regret that you hearkened to a dying man's appeal."

Courtnay shook his head. "That day can never come," he replied. "No matter what the future may have in store, I shall always be glad that I was able to render peaceful the last hour of your life. I think you are needlessly concerned about the future of your younger daughter. Training and environment go a long way toward counteracting hereditary tendency. Nothing shall be left undone to bring up the child a good woman. You can safely trust her future to me."

The dying man looked at him gratefully.

"God bless you!" he murmured. "I can die in peace."

An hour later he was dead.

"She was the daughter of a dancing master."

CHAPTER II.

SEPARATED.

Two children were playing in the yard surrounding the small white house as Andrew Courtnay came up to the gate. He paused for the moment and stood watching them. The elder girl had rich auburn hair and the creamy, colorless skin that usually accompanies it. Her eyes were brown and she had a grave, sweet mouth. The younger child was a fairylike little creature, blue-eyed, pink-cheeked, with very red lips and a mass of golden curls falling to her neck. She was exquisitely formed, and her every movement was instinct with grace. In the short time that he stood watching them unobserved, Courtnay noted the elder girl's tender care for her little sister, to whom she was evidently devotedly attached. He felt immediately drawn to the elder girl, but the younger, lovely as she was, did not appeal to him. He could not understand a man's allowing a soulless, tinseled creature like the child's mother to ruin his life.

He opened the gate and went toward the house. As he stepped upon the porch, a dark-haired woman, about fifty years of age, appeared in the doorway.

"I wish to see Mrs. Darnley," said Courtnay, lifting his hat.

"I am Mrs. Darnley," replied the woman. "Will you walk into the house?"

Courtnay bowed and followed her into a neat little parlor on the right of the hall.

"I have come to inform you, Mrs. Darnley, that John Weatherby, the father of the two little girls in your charge, is dead," said Courtnay.

Jane Darnley looked startled.

"I am sorry to hear it," she declared.

Courtnay went on to inform her in regard to the children. She looked relieved and at the same time somewhat sad.

"I am fond of the children and grieved at the thought of parting with them," she said. "But I am glad that their future is provided for. Will you be taking them away anyways soon, sir?" she asked, wistfully.

"I would like to take them away in the morning, if you can have them ready," Courtnay replied.

"They shall be ready, sir," Jane Darnley declared.

"Then I shall be here at about eleven o'clock," said Courtnay, rising. "By the way, I shall have to have a maid, a nurse, some one to look after them," he added, helplessly.

Jane Darnley smiled a little.

"I think I can find a girl to go along with you to look after the children," she said.

Courtnay looked relieved.

"Thank you," he murmured. "I would prefer that you prepared the children for their departure," he added, as they passed out on the porch. "Do they remember their father?"

"Ruth does, but Helene has forgotten him. Will you tell Ruth that her father is dead, sir?"

But Courtnay shrank from the task.

"She would better learn it from you than from a stranger," he replied.

The two children came up to the porch.

"This gentleman is a friend of your papa's, Ruth," Mrs. Darnley said, addressing the elder girl.

She looked up at Courtnay with her beautiful, soft brown eyes.

"Do you know when papa is coming back, sir?" she asked.

Courtnay looked at the child helplessly, pityingly, at a loss what to reply, Mrs. Darnley came to the rescue.

"I'll tell you later what this gentleman has told me about your papa, Ruth," she said.

"Tome on, Wuth, let's p'ay some more," murmured little Helene, petulantly. The red lips pouted, the blue eyes were clouded.

Courtnay looked at her attentively. Mrs. Darnely stole a curious glance at him, wondering if he knew about the child's mother.

"Yes, dearie, in a little while," Ruth whispered, soothingly, to her little sister.

Courtnay, as he looked at the pretty, petulant face of the little Helene, was thinking of John Weatherby's fears for her. It occurred to him that it might not be the simple thing he had fancied to fight against heredity.

"Helene's a little spoiled," Mrs. Darnley said, a little deprecatingly, as she laid a caressing hand on the child's gleaming curls. "She's so pretty everybody spoils her." She sent the children back to their play, adding, "You'll soon become attached to Ruth. She's a dear, sweet child."

Courtnay took his departure, returning to the hotel in the town. Upon the following morning, when he presented himself at the cottage, Jane Darnley met him with a troubled face.

"I have Ruth all ready to go with you, Mr. Courtnay," she said. "But Helene is not here. She's gone."

"Gone?" exclaimed Courtnay. "Gone where?"

"Her mother came yesterday after you left and took her away," explained Jane Darnley.

Courtnay reflected.

"I am not sure that you should have allowed her to have the child," he said, after a moment.

"What could I do to prevent it?" asked Mrs. Darnley. "She's the mother of the child, and who can dispute her right to her own child?"

"Her husband would, probably, if he were living," declared Courtnay, grimly.

"But he ain't living, and nobody else has the right," said Mrs. Darnley. "I told her about you, sir, and wanted to send for you, but she laughed at the idea. Said she had no business with you; that fifty husbands could not give you any right over her child. I made bold to remind her that she had deserted her child when it most needed a mother's care. She laughed in my face in the most shameless manner," Jane Darnley's sallow cheeks flushed resentfully at the recollection. "I don't know whether you know, sir, that she ran away from her husband with another man?" Indignation had rendered her less cautious, had loosened her tongue.

"Yes, I know about it," replied Courtnay, gravely. "John Weatherby told me on his deathbed."

"It was awful!" Jane Darnley declared, with a shake of the head. "If ever a man was plumb crazy about a woman, John Weatherby was about her. He was never the same man again after she run away and left him. She's gone off fearful in looks," with a suspicion of satisfaction. "She's lost her beautiful coloring and taken to painting her face."

"Did she say anything relative to her manner of living?" asked Courtnay. "She may not be a proper person to have charge of the little girl."

"Oh, she's respectable enough now, I believe. The man she went away with married her after John Weatherby got a divorce."

"Then nothing can be done to take the child away from her," declared Courtnay. "If she's leading a reputable life, there would be no use disputing her right to have possession of the child. Poor Weatherby!" he murmured half to himself. "I am glad he doesn't know about it. I am afraid he would have reason to fear for the child's future. No doubt she has heard of his death, or she would not have tried for the child."

"Oh, yes, she knows about it," said Mrs. Darnley. "She spoke of him in the most heartless manner."

"Was she until willing to go with her?" asked Courtnay.

"Oh, yes, Helene took to her at once. She promised her candy and toys and all kind of things. Yes, Helene was willing enough to go with her."

"How did her sister take the separation?"

"Poor little Ruth is broken-hearted. She was so attached to Helene. I've had a time with her. She cried and sobbed all night long."

"She's only a child, and she'll soon forget," declared Courtnay.

He was rather concerned, however, when he saw the child, she was so changed. Her white face and sorrowful eyes shocked him. He spoke to her gently and kindly, but did not attempt to console her, making no reference at all to her sister.

Ruth seemed in an apathetic state, worn out with grief. She displayed no regret at parting with Mrs. Darnley, who cried and was hurt at the child's apparent indifference. Courtnay understood. He was not so sure that Ruth would forget as soon as he had fancied.

"It is by no means likely that she and her sister will ever come together again," he thought, rather grimly. "Their paths in life are not likely to cross."

He little guessed how the destinies of the sisters were fated to be interwoven.

CHAPTER III.

THE RETURN.

A week later Andrew Courtnay entered the outer office of George Walsh, attorney-at-law, in Baltimore. He was shown into the private office, where the lawyer, a portly man of about fifty-five, was seated at his desk. He started up as Courtnay entered.

"Andrew Courtnay!" he exclaimed, coming forward with outstretched hand. "Is it possible?"

They shook hands heartily and sat down.

"You are surprised to see me?" queried Courtnay, with a smile.

"Well, rather," replied the lawyer. "It's been thirteen years since you went away. I did not know whether you were dead or alive. I tried to locate you, but without success, three years ago." He hesitated a moment and then added, "At the time of your brother's death."

It was a moment or so before Courtnay spoke.

"So my brother is dead?" he said, at length.

"Yes, he has been dead for three years."

"Is his widow living at Courtnay Manor?"

"No, Courtnay Manor is for sale."

Andrew Courtnay looked up quickly, frowningly.

"For sale?"

"Yes. Your brother lived beyond his income and heavily mortgaged Courtnay Manor. His widow would have been left practically without any means of support but for a three-thousand-dollar life insurance. She and her little son went away from Courtnay Manor soon after your brother's death. She went out West to live with her brother."

Andrew Courtnay inclined his head, but made no comment.

"Is Courtnay Manor still on the market?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I will buy it." As the lawyer glanced at him questioningly, he added, with a grim smile. "I went away from Courtnay Manor with a few hundred dollars in my pocket. I have returned with a fortune of seven or eight hundred thousand."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the lawyer, genuinely pleased. "Permit me to congratulate you. May I venture to inquire how you accumulated such a fortune?"

"In the gold fields of California."

"I am indeed pleased to hear of your good fortune," declared the lawyer, with sincerity. His firm had had charge of the Courtnays' affairs for many years, but of late they had not proved very lucrative. Now it looked as though things were taking a turn for the better.

"Will you attend at once to the purchasing of Courtnay Manor?" said Andrew Courtnay.

"I will," replied the lawyer. "I think I may be able to get it for you at a reasonable figure."

"Never mind the price," said Courtnay. "I would not allow the ancestral home of the Courtnays to go to strangers if it took every dollar I possess to prevent it."

"I understand how you feel about it, of course," declared Walsh. "Are you going to Chester'on?"

"Yes. I suppose I shall find my sister, Mrs. Allan, there?"

"Yes. Mrs. Allan is a widow. Her husband died ten years ago. She has one child, a son."

The two men conversed for a while longer; then Andrew Courtnay arose and took his departure. His face was grave and thoughtful as he walked slowly back to the Hotel Rennert at which he was stopping. The news of his brother's death had startled him, but it had not caused him any grief. He had ceased to regard with affection the brother who had been his successful rival. The fact that the woman he still loved was now free had no power to move him, offered no temptation to make another effort to win her. That was all over and done with. She was his brother's widow, the mother of his brother's child, not the fair young girl whose virgin affection he had tried to win.

That night Courtnay, accompanied by Ruth and her nurse, took the boat for Chesterton. The next afternoon he and Ruth walked along a pretty, shaded street until they reached a gray bay-windowed house, with a green lawn in front and flowerbeds rioting in June bloom.

Andrew Courtnay opened the low white gate and went toward the house. The front door stood open. He hesitated a moment; then, with a smile, half grim, half sad, he lifted the old-fashioned knocker on the door and stood waiting.

A neat colored maid appeared, and Courtnay inquired for Mrs. Allan. The girl ushered him and Ruth into a pretty parlor, where in the sunny bay-window sat a slender, patrician-looking woman sat sewing.

She looked up. "Andrew!" she cried, breathlessly, staring at him pale and wide-eyed. Then she arose and went toward him. "You've come back at last?" she murmured, a little tremulously.

His eyes softened as he bent and kissed her.

"Yes, I have come back."

She looked down at the child beside him.

"You are married? This is your little girl?" she queried.

Courtnay shook his head.

"No. I have neither wife nor child. This little girl is Ruth Weatherby, my adopted daughter," he explained.

"Oh!" Nina Allan looked curious.

"She is the orphaned daughter of a friend," Courtnay explained, briefly. "Her father has been dead only a short time."

"Poor little thing! No wonder she looks so sad!" said Mrs. Allan, pityingly. "She has been fretting for her father."

She sat down, drawing Ruth to her caressingly. Courtnay did not explain that Ruth's grief was more for her living sister than her dead father. Now that the child was with her disreputable mother, he would liked to have ignored the relationship between her and his adopted daughter altogether. Ruth had been told by Mrs. Darnley of her father's death. She had cried and grieved bitterly, but grief at the parting with her sister seemed to have swallowed up the other.

"I learned in Baltimore of Oscar's death," Andrew Courtnay said, as he seated himself near his sister.

"Yes. Poor Oscar!" murmured Mrs. Allan, sighing.

"It seems that he bartered his birthright," said Courtnay, with bitterness. "Courtnay Manor, the ancestral home of the Courtnays for centuries, is to be sold."

"It's a dreadful thing to happen, I admit!" murmured Nina Allan.

"It's unpardonable," declared Andrew Courtnay, sternly.

"Don't be too hard on him, Andrew," pleaded Mrs. Allan. "He was of a different nature from you. And he is—dead."

"Yes, but this is a case where the evil that a man does lives after him and falls upon the innocent. Walsh told me that he left a son."

"Yes, such a handsome boy, very like his father."

"What is his name?"

"Walter. He is twelve years old now. I have not heard anything of or about them for years now. It was dreadful their having to leave Courtnay Manor. It grieves me horribly to think that it must pass into the hands of strangers.

"It will not pass into the hands of strangers," said Andrew Courtnay, quietly. "I am going to buy it back."

"What?" she stared at him in amazement. Ruth slipped away from her and moved quietly to the window where she stood looking out, a plaintive look in her brown eyes."

"Yes," Courtnay went on to explain. "I made all arrangements while I was in Baltimore to do so. I intend to spend the rest of my life at Courtnay Manor. I am a rich man," he added, and told her now he had acquired his wealth.

Nina Allan listened eagerly. She was not an avaricious woman, but it naturally occurred to her that her son would inherit at least a part of his uncle's fortune.

Just then a slim, blonde-haired boy, between thirteen and fourteen years of age, entered the room. He stopped at the sight of Andrew Courtnay, and looked from him to the little girl at the window with the sunlight on her long rich hair. The boy's eyes lingered upon her.

"Come here, Bruce," said Mrs. Allan. "This is my son, Andrew," she said. "Bruce, this is your Uncle Andrew."

Courtnay shook hands with his nephew, who looked at him with undisguised interest. He had often heard his mother speak of his Uncle Andrew. Courtnay glanced the boy over. He had a fine, straight nose, pale blue eyes and thin, determined-looking lips. Mrs. Allan watched the two attentively, trying to guess what impression her, son made upon his uncle. After a moment, she turned toward Ruth.

"Come here, my dear," she said.

Ruth came to her, hardly glancing at the boy who was looking at her eagerly.

"This little girl is Ruth Weatherby, your uncle's adopted daughter," Mrs. Allan explained.

Bruce looked surprised, for, like his mother, he had concluded that Ruth was Andrew Courtnay's own child. He was also a little disappointed, for it had pleased him to think that the pretty little girl with the long auburn hair was his cousin. He went up to her and shook hands. He was an exceedingly well-mannered boy, very self-possessed, self-reliant, and with a decided will of his own. Ruth gave him her small hand listlessly.

"Take Ruth out into the garden, Bruce, and gather her some flowers," said Mrs. Allan. "The fresh air will do her good. She looks so pale."

Bruce took Ruth's hand and led her out through a glass door opening onto the lawn. He took her to a rustic bench overlooking the bay.

"You can see the water from here," he said. "It looks very pretty, sparkling in the sunlight."

But Ruth turned her head away with a little shiver of pain.

"Why, don't you like to look at the water?" asked Bruce.

She shook her head.

"No, it makes me think of Helene."

"Who is Helene?" asked Bruce.

"My little sister." Her voice quivered, her small bosom heaved.

"Is—is she dead?" asked Bruce, in an awed voice.

"Oh, no, no!" she replied, quickly. "She is not dead."

Bruce looked at her with a smile.

"Oh, if she isn't dead, you'll see her again some time," he said, cheerily.

She looked at him, her cheeks flushing, her eyes lighting. Neither Jane Darnley nor Andrew Courtnay had tried to comfort her by telling her that she would see her sister again.

"Do you think so?" she murmured.

"Why, of course," replied Bruce, readily. He was thinking how pretty she was. "So what's the use of fretting? Now I am going to gather you some flowers."

He turned away. She looked after him gratefully.

CHAPTER IV.

A COURTNAY'S LOVE.

Fourteen years later. A day in October, chill and gray.

An auburn-haired girl, with brown eyes, a cream-white skin, and sweet, grave mouth, stood on the wide-pillared portico at Courtnay Manor, gazing thoughtfully out over the bay. An erect, slim, fair-haired man came in at the gate, crossed the lawn, upon which the autumn leaves lay thickly, and passed up the steps of the portico to the girl's side.

"Good morning, Bruce," she said, as he lifted his hat.

"How is my uncle, Ruth?" he asked.

She shook her head. "He is no better. I am afraid that he is worse," she paused. Bruce Allan looked thoughtfully out over the gray water. "He has wired for Mr. Walsh." Bruce turned and looked at her. "He will be here on the noon boat."

It was a moment or so before Bruce Allan spoke. A speculative look had crept into his blue eyes.

"I suppose my uncle intends making his will," he said, at length.

"Very probably. I do not know," Ruth replied, indifferently.

Bruce gave her a keen glance, but the next moment his eyes lost their cold, calculating look and softened. He knew she had never speculated as to what disposition Andrew Courtnay would make of his wealth, that she knew she would not be left unprovided for, and beyond that she gave no thought to the matter. She was sincerely attracted to the man who had in every way fulfilled the promise he had made to her dead father. She was deeply grieved as she realized that the illness which had stricken him down two weeks previous was likely to end in death.

"What a dreary day!" she murmured, shivering in the chill air.

"Come into the house, Ruth," said Bruce. "You have been standing here too long."

She turned and he followed her into the wide hall. She went and stood in front of the big fireplace in which great pine knots were burning. Ruth stood silently gazing into the fire. She looked pale and sad. Bruce Allan's eyes lingered upon her, tender, passionate. She was a beautiful, queenly-looking girl, and Bruce knew her to be all that was best and noblest in woman.

"Ruth!"

She started slightly. She had almost forgotten his presence.

"Yes?"

"There is something I want to say to you, Ruth." There was that in his voice which aroused her from her grave abstraction and caused her to glance at him questioningly. "I love you!" he said, as he met her eyes. She looked away from him, gazing again into the fire. "I think I loved you the first moment I saw you," he went on, reminiscently. "Do you remember? You

were standing in the bay window of our parlor with the sun shining on your long, reddish hair. I thought I had never seen any one so pretty before. In my heart I have always thought of you as my love, my sweetheart. Ruth, surely you must have guessed that I love you?"

"I have always known that you care a great deal for me, Bruce," she replied, gently. "You have always been so very good to me."

"Ruth!" He made a passionate movement toward her.

She stopped him with a gesture.

"Do you think you should speak to me like this—now?" she said.

"I have a reason for speaking now," he replied. "If my uncle dies, it may bring changes into both our lives. So I tell you now that I love you, and ask you if you care for me, if you will become my wife."

She did not immediately reply. Her brown eyes were troubled.

"I would be very ungrateful, Bruce," she said, at length, "if I did not care for you. I was such a lonely little child, and from the first you made my life brighter, happier," she paused, her thoughts going back to the day she had first seen Bruce Allan, and remembering how he had cheered and comforted her with the hope of one day seeing her sister. That hope had never been realized. From the time she had parted from Helene, she had never seen her nor had any tidings of her. But she never ceased to love her nor to hope that the day would come when they would meet again.

"You admit that you care for me, Ruth," he said, eagerly. "Will you marry me?"

"I am not sure, Bruce, that I care for you in that way," she replied, gravely.

"Do you care for any one else?"

She shook her head.

"No."

He drew a long breath of relief.

"Then I shall teach you to love me," he exclaimed.

"You may fail, Bruce," she reminded him, gently.

"I shall never give up the hope of winning you, Ruth," he paused, then added, in a lower voice, "until you are the wife of another man."

"I think it would be best if you learned to care for some one else, Bruce," she suggested.

He shook his head with a faint smile. "It would be impossible for me to do so," he replied. "It is characteristic of the men of my race to concentrate their love upon one woman. That is the way the Courtnays love. My Uncle Andrew failed to win the woman he loved, but he never loved another."

She looked at him troubled. "Bruce, it would make me very unhappy to spoil your life as your uncle's was spoiled."

He looked at her with a tenderness that was half reverence in his eyes.

"I know that it would grieve you, dear," he said, very gently. "I think it is your womanliness that makes me care for you so much, Ruth. No matter how beautiful and attractive a woman may be, her greatest charm, after all, lies in her womanliness." He took her hand and lifted it to his lips. "I would serve for you as Jacob served for Rachel."

She sighed a little. Her womanly instinct told her that Bruce Allan would never call into being the love of which she believed herself capable.

The shrill whistle of an approaching steamboat came to them from the bay. Bruce Allan's face changed, the tenderness gave place to alertness.

"There comes the steamer!" he said, briskly. "Mr. Walsh will be here in a little while." He took up his hat.

"Will you not go up and see your uncle, Bruce?" asked Ruth.

He shook his head.

"No, not now," he replied, and then he went out.

About an hour later, George Walsh, the lawyer, was ushered into the room in which Andrew Courtnay lay with the white foreshadowing of death upon his face.

"I am grieved to find you so ill," the lawyer said, as he went up to the bed.

"My race is run," Courtnay declared, with something like his old grim smile.

"I hope it is not so bad as that," murmured the lawyer, taking a seat beside the bed.

"I have sent for you to make my will," said Courtnay. He paused a moment and then added, "You will, perhaps, think it a strange will."

The continuation of this remarkable story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year, and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

* * *

Naturally.

Plane—I always try to make things as smooth as possible for every one.

Wheel—And I do a good turn once in a while myself.

"It would be best if you learned to care for some one else."

A Knight of the Range

By Stephen Angus Cox

(Copyright 1912 by W. D. Boyce Co.)

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CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER SET-TO.

SEVERAL days passed, and Arthur Knight did not again show up at the schoolhouse. He had taken Helen Ormsby at her word, and did not feel like appearing there and taking the chance of a snubbing. He asked Katie questions regarding the schoolma'am frequently, but the little girl did not have much to tell him, save that Miss Ormsby seemed to be a little bit peevish at times, and scolded her pupils rather severely if they did not behave themselves.

"She never asks about me none?" Arthur queried, on one of the occasions when he was asking Katie about the actions of the schoolma'am.

"No," replied Katie; "and she won't let me say anything about you."

"Oh, she won't, hey?" exclaimed Knight, in surprise.

"No. I started to say something about you, yesterday at recess, and she stopped me quick. She said she wasn't interested in what you did or where you went, and had no desire to hear your name mentioned."

"Well, what d'yuh think uh that!" exclaimed the cowboy. "Say, Kate, et looks like she don't like me any worth mentionin'. Ain't that the way et looks to yuh?"

Katie shook her head. "I—I—can't say, Arthur," she said. "I wouldn't act that way, but maybe she might like you and still act that way. She might pretend not to like you, just to—to—kind of get you to thinking more about her."

"Say, is that right?" exclaimed Knight. "Yuh see, Kate, I don't know much about wimmen, an' I have to kind uh guess at what they think. Now, d'yuh really think, Kate, that she's stringin' me like that?"

"I don't know that she is, Arthur," was the reply; "but it is possible." To herself Katie said. "I'm sure she likes Arthur, and is just acting the way she does to tease him and make him want her all the more. I—I'd like to scratch her!".

"Well, say, Kate, I'm goin' to go around there this afternoon, and have a talk with schoolma'am," declared the cowboy. "If's she's foolin', I'm goin' to try to make her tip her hand some. She can't play fast and loose with a fellow uh my size always, no none whatever. Ef she persists in wantin' extry sets uh cards up her sleeve, then I won't play, an' that's all there is to et."

So that afternoon found him at the schoolhouse when school let out, and as soon as the children had gone and Miss Ormsby appeared, he greeted her in his usual breezy style.

"Good afternoon, schoolma'am," he said. "How are yuh, anyhow? Got over your mad spell yet?"

Helen Ormsby gave the cowboy a nod that was scarcely noticeable at all, and said coldly:

"Good afternoon, Mr. Knight. I believe that, the last time I saw you, I requested that you should not come around here again. Did I not?"

Knight scratched his head, grinned and then said:

"I believe yuh did say somethin' like that, Miss Ormsby, but yuh see, I got to kind uh wantin' to see yuh again, an' so I—I—jest thought I'd ride around here anyhow. An' Katie—I mean Kate, said that——"

Helen whirled upon him like a flash. "What did Katie say?" she asked, quickly. Her eyes flashed, and she looked at the cowboy imperiously. "Tell me what Katie said!" she commanded, much in the tone she used to refractory pupils. "Tell me quickly!"

The cowboy was taken aback. He stared at her, opened-mouthed, for a few moments, and seemed unable to say anything. Evidently her sudden flare-up disconcerted him—indeed this was the case, and to himself he exclaimed: "There she goes ag'in! Say, et's jest like touchin' uh match to powder, an' that's a fact. I don't see no sense in actin' like thet, myself." His thoughts were interrupted by Miss Ormsby, who took a couple of steps forward, and was at his side.

"Are you going to tell me what Katie said, Arthur Knight?" the young woman cried, sharply. "If she has been storying about me, why it will go hard with her, that's all!"

This aroused the cowboy. He couldn't stand it to hear Katie threatened, and he blurted out: "Don't you go to thrashin' or scoldin' Katie none, Miss Ormsby! I told yuh once thet Kate wouldn't story. She ain't built that way."

"Tell me what she said, and I will be the judge as to her truthfulness," retorted the schoolma'am, coldly.

"All right, I'll tell yuh what Kate said," said the cowboy. "She said that—that yuh might pretend not to like me, just to—to kind uh get me to thinkin' more about yuh. Yuh see, I don't know much about wimmen, an' I asked Katie—Kate—if she thought yuh cared anything for me, an' then she told me that yuh wouldn't let her say anythin' about me at school; an' when I said as how that looked like yuh didn't think very much uh me, she said that, yuh know—about as how maybe yuh might pretend not to like me, just to kind uh make me think all the more uh yuh, see?"

"Yes, I see," said Helen, coldly. "I see that this Kate is rather precocious for a child of her age. She——"

"Stop right thar, schoolma'am!" almost roared the cowboy, sitting very erect in his saddle and glaring at the young woman fiercely. "Don't you go to sayin' nothin' ag'in Kate! I don't know what that 'precoshus' is, that yuh say she is, but I know et ain't so! Katie—I mean Kate—is——"

"Then I suppose you mean to say that I'm a liar?" cried Helen, hotly. "You mean to——"

"No, I don't, schoolma'am," broke in the cowboy. "I wouldn't think uh callin' yuh that, nohow. But yuh sure are mistaken about Kate bein' 'precoshus.' She ain't, Miss Ormsby. She's sure one uh——"

"You don't seem to grasp my meaning," interrupted Helen, coldly. "When I said Katie was precocious, I meant that she was wise beyond her years—that she was unusually bright and intelligent for one of her age, that is all."

"Oh, is that it?" said Knight. "Well, that's all right, then."

"But while Katie is precocious, as I have said," went on Helen, coldly, "I must say that she is also mistaken in thinking that I am pretending not to like you in order to get you to think more about me. Such is not the case, I assure you. I don't care whether you think about me at all, or not, Mr. Knight. In fact, I would prefer that you do not think about me. And I also request again, and this time I want you to comply with my request, that you shall not come around here again, 'pestering' me, as you so elegantly put it, the other day. I mean what I say, and this is final. Good afternoon, Mr. Knight!" Then Helen almost ran down the trail, leaving Arthur Knight staring after her with conflicting emotions expressed on his decidedly frank and ingenuous face.

The cowboy was almost certain that there had been a tremor in the schoolma'am's voice as she talked, at the last, and that tears had leaped into her eyes, and this was what was puzzling him, and causing the conflicting feelings.

"By thunder, but this beats the deck!" he finally growled. "I'm kind uh mad at schoolma'am, an' then ag'in I feel kind uh sorry for her, an' on top uh that—blamed ef I don't like her better this minute than I did before! Say, whatever am I goin' to do, anyhow? She seems to keep gittin' further away from me all the time, an' ef she keeps on the gait she's travelin', she'll soon be clear out uh ropin' distance. Gee, I wish I knowed more about wimmen—an' schoolma'am in partickler!"

CHAPTER VI

TROUBLE AT SCHOOL.

When Helen Ormsby reached the Boggs home, that afternoon, she went to her room and remained there till supper-time, and when she came forth to supper, her eyes looked somewhat red, and after the meal was over and while Mrs. Boggs and Lizzie were washing the dishes, the latter said:

"I believe Miss Ormsby's be'n cryin', maw. Did you notice how red her eyes wuz?"

"Nonsense, Lizzie," said Mrs. Boggs. "Whut would she be cryin' at, child?"

"I seen Arthur Knight ridin' away frum the schoolhouse this afternoon," was the reply. "I believe he wuz there, an' thet they had a quarrel."

"Thet is foolishness, Lizzie. Miss Ormsby has be'n studyin' an' readin' too much, an' et made her eyes red. Thet's all."

"I don't think so, maw," said Lizzie, stubbornly. "I'm sure she had be'n cryin'."

And Lizzie was right. Helen Ormsby had been crying. She really liked the big, handsome cowboy, but in spite of herself, it seemed that she could not keep from quarreling with him every time he put in an appearance, and so drove him away—when in her secret heart she knew that she really wished to keep him by her side. It was sorrow and vexation because of this that had caused her to stay in her room and give way to a crying spell, and after having done so she felt relieved, and having decided that the next time the knight of the range came around she would treat him courteously and be nice to him, she felt much better.

But the next day at school, the sight of

Katie Fletcher seemed to arouse all the worst attributes of Helen Ormsby's nature. She did not have many bad traits, but she was human, and so had her faults; and somehow, she attributed the trouble she was having with Arthur Knight to this little girl. It was unreasonable—Helen secretly realized this fact, but she could not get the idea out of her head, and a feeling of resentment, almost dislike, toward Katie was the result. She caught Katie up on every possible point and occasion, scolding her for whispering to her seatmate, and for not studying constantly, and censured her for not having her lessons better.

"I don't know what I shall do with you, Katie, if you don't have your lessons better," said Helen, somewhat sternly. "You must study your lessons more than you do, and not put in so much time whispering and playing."

"But you said the other day that I should not study too hard, yet a while, Miss Ormsby, for fear I might bring on the fever again," said Katie.

"Don't talk back to me!" snapped Miss Ormsby. "If you get saucy, I shall surely whip you! Go to your seat, miss, and study your lesson. And you will stay in at recess, too!"

"But, you said——" began Katie, only to be cut short by her teacher.

"Not a word! Do as I tell you, miss! Go to your seat!"

Katie, a look of commingled surprise, protest, and resentment on her face, obeyed without another word, and walked to her seat and took up her book. But she did not study much, although she kept her eyes on the pages of the lesson. Instead, she was doing a lot of thinking, and trying to figure out why Miss Ormsby had acted in this manner toward her.

"She never did it before," thought Katie. "I don't understand it."

It was hard to have to stay in at recess, while the other pupils were out at play, and Miss Ormsby made it still harder by sitting in front of the child and forcing her to study her lesson. The result was, that Katie went home with a bad headache, which grew worse, until finally she had to lie down. She did not tell her mother about the way she had been treated by her teacher, but when Arthur Knight, having heard that she was not feeling well, came in to see her, she told him.

"So schoolma'am scolded yuh an' kep' yuh in at recess, did she!" the cowboy exclaimed. "An' she up an' made yuh keep on studyin', an' caused yuh to come home with a sick headache, did she? yuh only up frum a sickbed uh couple uh weeks! Say, I sure don't like that, lit—I mean Kate! I'm sure goin' to go an' tell her what I think about et, thet's whatever!"

"No, you mustn't do that, Arthur," said the little girl, though her face lighted up with pleasure because he showed such warmth of feeling in her behalf. "Don't say anything to her. I guess she was just kind of out of sorts and not feeling well herself, was the reason she did it."

"Well, she'd better not do et ag'in," said the cowboy, grimly. "Ef she does, yuh' tell me, Kate, an' I'll sure go straight to her an' entertain her with a few remarks, yuh bet!" Then he kissed Katie, patted her cheek, smoothed her hair back, and telling her good night gently, walked softly out of the room.

Katie stirred slightly after Arthur was gone, and then murmured in a voice that had a little tremor in it: "I wish he—hadn't patted my cheek. Big folks pat the cheeks of little children, and I ain't—I don't want to be—little—to him."

Next day Katie was feeling about as well as usual, and she went to school; but Miss Ormsby was still out of sorts, and persisted in finding fault with everything Katie did, and also censured her for things she did not do. Katie, naturally a spirited little girl, resented this attitude on the part of her teacher, and although she had not intended to do so, answered back, once, when scolded as she believed unjustly. This, of course, angered Miss Ormsby, and she ordered Katie to stay in at noon. This was a hardship indeed, to have to stay indoors during the noon-hour, and when her teacher took a seat in front of her and made her take up her book and go to studying, after she had eaten her lunch, Katie rebelled.

"I'm not going to study during the noon-hour!" she said, determinedly. "It's hard enough to have to stay in, Miss Ormsby, without studying."

"What is this?" cried Miss Ormsby, angrily. "You tell me what you won't do, and defy me, miss? I'd have you to know that I am in control here, and that you will do what I tell you! Either study your lesson, as I have ordered, or else take a whipping! You can take your choice."

Katie looked the teacher in the eye dauntlessly. "I won't study during the noon-hour, Miss Ormsby," she said, quietly, but firmly. "You sent me home with a sick headache yesterday, because you made me study during recess, and it will be worse if I study during the noon-hour, and I am not going to make myself sick that way. Arthur Knight said you had no business acting that way, and that if you made me study during recess again, he would give you a talking too."

Katie was sorry she had told about Arthur, the moment she had said it, but it was the truth, and she felt that there was no real harm in telling Miss Ormsby what the cowboy had said. Katie looked at the young woman rather wonderingly, now, for instead of flying into a passion, as the little girl had expected, Helen Ormsby sat perfectly still and gazed at Katie, and seemingly right on through her, while her face grew pale as death, and presently a little gasp escaped her lips.

"Oh!" she said, in a hard, unnatural tone of voice. "So Arthur Knight said that, did he?"

Katie nodded assent.

"Very well," still in that strained, unnatural voice and with the peculiar expression on her face and in her eyes, "I want you to do me a favor, Katie. I want you to say to Mr. Arthur Knight that I would like to see him, here at the schoolhouse, tomorrow afternoon, after school is out. Will you do this?"

"Yes, Miss Ormsby," was the reply. Katie still regarded the teacher with a puzzled air. She could not understand what Miss Ormsby's looks and actions portended.

"Tell Mr. Knight that I have something very important to say to him," said Helen, in cold, measured accents. "You may go outside with the rest of the children, Katie."

Without a word, and still with the puzzled look on her face, Katie obeyed.

CHAPTER VII.
A WARM SESSION.

"Kate told me as how yuh had somethin' yuh wanted to say to me, somethin' mighty important, schoolma'am, an' here I am."

It was afternoon, school was out, and Arthur Knight had just come riding up to the schoolhouse on Thunderbolt. Miss Ormsby had emerged as he appeared, and he had spoken as above.

Helen Ormsby bowed coldly.

"Yes, Mr. Knight," she replied, "I told Katie to tell you to come, and I have something very important to tell you." Her tone was calm, but very cold and measured. The cowboy eyed her dubiously; there was something about her air that he did not like. He felt that something, he could not just tell what, threatened. From the experiences he had had with the schoolma'am, he more than half thought it might be a cyclone.

"She's sure a reg'lar volcano for spoutin'," was his reflection. "I wonder what she's got up her sleeve now?"

He was soon to find out, for Helen, after a brief pause, as if to give her caller time to feel impressed, went on:

"I wanted to tell you, Mr. Knight, that I think you are about the most bigoted, most meddlesome man I have ever met."

The cowboy wrinkled up his brows and grinned in a comical fashion, and then, shrugging his shoulders, said:

"Oh, is that what yuh wanted, schoolma'am? Well, say, yuh went to uh lot uh trouble for nothin', then, 'cause I knowed that already. I come here expectin' that yuh'd tell me somethin' I didn't know, somethin' new, yuh know. I'm plumb disapp'inted, schoolma'am, I am for a fact."

"You needn't be," coldly; "I'm not through yet."

"Oh, yuh ain't through yet, eh?"

"No; there is more that I wish to tell you."

Knight settled himself in his saddle, as if to be more comfortable, and then said, briefly: "Go ahead, schoolma'am."

"Very well. I have gathered, Mr. Knight, from all that I have heard you say, and from what Katie has said, that you think I care something for you. Well, I want to disabuse your mind of that idea, for it is an error. If you will stop and think a moment, you will yourself no doubt realize what an error it is; for to imagine that I, a young woman of education and culture should for one moment take even a passing fancy to a great big, awkward, ignorant boor of a cowboy, such as you are, is absurd."

She paused, as if to arrange in her thoughts just what she wished to say, and Knight shifted his position in the saddle, and looked down at her expectantly. The grin was still on his face, but it lacked the easy, devil-may-care expression it had borne at first.

"Go on, schoolma'am," he drawled; "don't stop on my account. I beg uh yuh. Yuh see, this is the first time I ever had my pedigree read to me, an' I'm a whole lot curious, yuh know, to find out jest what kind uv a chap I am, anyhow. Go right ahead, schoolma'am. Give me the whole story."

Somehow, something in the tone and air of the cowboy angered Helen Ormsby, and she burst out passionately: "Oh, you big-headed, impudent, arrogant, ignorant lout! You are only fit to drive cows to water, and here you have been presuming to make love to me! Why, Arthur Knight, an idiot ought to know better than that! You don't know as much as lots of the eight and ten-year-old children in my school. You doubtless can scarcely read or write, and you don't know how to talk at all! You——"

"Nobuddy'd ever say that about yuh, schoolma'am," broke in the cowboy, gravely; "for yuh sure can spout some, when yuh git good a-goin'. But go ahead; don't let me interrupt yuh. I wouldn't want to stop yuh right in the middle uh the story, for et's a whole lot interestin'. I'm sure findin' out things about myself—things I didn't have any idea of. I'm acquirin' knowledge a lot, Yuh was sayin'——" He paused and looked at the young woman expectantly.

"When I said you don't know how to talk, I meant that you did not know anything about grammar, and——"

"That's so, schoolma'am," again interrupted the cowboy, with grave soberness; "I don't know anything about grammer—on either my mother's or my father's side. They wuz both dead afore I was born."

"I'm not speaking of your grandmothers," coldly. "I'm speaking of grammar, a book, the book that teaches the use of the English language. It is something you evidently know nothing about."

"Score another bull's-eye for the schoolma'am. Yuh're right ag'in, Miss Ormsby, yuh sure are. I don't know nothin' about the English language. Yuh see, I'm American through an' through, an' so plain United States is good enough for me. But go on. Yuh was sayin'——"

Helen Ormsby made a grimace, and then laughed in such an irritating manner that had she been a man Knight would have got down and given the mirthful one a thrashing.

"Such ignorance!" she exclaimed. "It is almost beyond belief! And you have had the impudence, the assurance, to think that I might take a liking to you!" The scorn was so cutting that the cowboy's grin began to change till it bore a slight resemblance to the grin that illuminates the countenance of a bulldog when it is getting ready for the warpath. "Why, such an attitude on your part, Arthur Knight, is an insult to me! You say 'yuh' for 'you', 'ain't' for 'is not', 'seen' for 'saw', 'has went' for 'has gone', 'gimme' for 'give me' and a multitude of other word atrocities just as bad. It is terrible to be forced to hear you murder the King's English in such a manner, and I do not intend to listen to you in future, for this is the last time I shall meet you. I don't want you ever to come near me again, Arthur Knight, and I mean just what I say!"

"Are yuh through, schoolma'am?" queried Knight, when she paused.

"Yes, that is all. You may go."

"An—yuh're quite sure yuh mean all that what yuh said, are yuh, schoolma'am?" queried the cowboy, as he slowly straightened up in the saddle and looked down at the young woman. There was no smile on his face now.

"Yes, yes!" cried Helen, angrily. "Yes, of course I mean it! And what is more, I hate you, Arthur Knight!" passionately. "Yes, I hate you!—I hate you! Now, go! Go quickly! I hate the very sight of your face, and I hope that I shall never have to lay eyes on it again!"

"Well, schoolma'am," said Knight, slowly and calmly, but with a certain hardness that Helen recognized and felt, "yuh shall sure be gratified. Yuh won't ever lay eyes on my face ag'in, except by accident, or 'nless you send a special invitation for me to come an' bring this here mug uh mine into the line uh yore vision—that's whatever. Yuh see, as I told yuh once afore, I'm the most accommodatin' feller in the world, an' now, seein' as I know what your wishes are about the matter, why, I'll sure comply with 'em. So long, schoolma'am. I wish yuh good luck, Miss Ormsby, an' I hope that when yuh do get married, yuh'll tie up with somebuddy what kin sling the English grammar-book to beat the band, all similar to yourself, an' that he won't never sling nothin' in the way uh dishes or furniture at your head. I'm off. Good-by, Miss Ormsby. Away we go, Thunderbolt!" and putting spurs to his horse, Arthur Knight rode away as if a horde of demons from the lower regions were at his heels.

The conclusion of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

"Yes, I hate you! I hate you!"

Cupid Trolley Car.

"Romance has been forced into a corner nowadays," said the old-timer gravely. "Why, only yesterday I overheard a proposal of marriage on the street car made by a young man on his way to work, while clinging frantically to a strap, who lurched backward and forward above the upturned face of his lady love, who sat on a side seat and was also bound for her place of employment, in an early morning hour. This offer of his heart and hand made by the swaying sweetheart, as the car hurtled around curves or jerked him about with its sudden stops and starts, lacked many romantic elements, yet, in our modern vernacular, 'it had the punch.'

"Clutching tightly the strap, the eager John Henry told his fair one that he had to know that day whether to buy 'that house from Smith or not.' 'I can furnish it up,' he said. 'Bess, it's up to you.'

"The girl bowed her head and allowed herself the luxury of a moment's hesitation and her sweetheart an anxious moment of trembling suspense. When she glanced up with a sad smile she said: 'John, you may tell Smith to make out the deed and I'll hand my employer my resignation today.'

"That's the way it's done nowadays," continued the old-timer. "Aboard our excursion boats when the yellow light of the moon has its proverbial baneful effect upon the mind, on each and every one of our park benches every pleasant evening in the summer, as couples promenade through our gayly lighted amusement parks, at the dance, at the noonday lunch club, at the bathing beach, at the five-cent show, anywhere and everywhere and under all sorts of adverse and trying conditions the wooer has his say. And their troth is plighted among hundreds of other persons, whose presence is unnoted and unheeded by the two whose thoughts dwell fondly upon future days.

"Say, if I had adopted some of the tactics when I proposed to my wife that the young swains of today employ so successfully, I'll bet I would have got a jolt."

Who Was the Traitor?

A STORY OF FORT DESPAIR

By WILLIAM H. MANNING

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CHAPTER XII.

THE VOICELESS VISITOR.

THERE was a moment when the Commandant seemed to waver, almost to hover at the point of falling. Then he abruptly drew himself up and stood with military erectness. His face grew stern and severe.

"This garrison is being dragged to the gutter!" he said, bitterly, "but this new outrage should be capable of more definite investigation. It shall be investigated, explained, avenged. I have given forty years of my life to the service of my country, and I'll not brook these continued disgraces. I will show men that the lion is not yet dead!"

Saywood raised his hat in mute sympathy. It was pathetic, then, to see the grief of the old soldier. Feeling that words were weak, he made no reply.

"Come to my private room," Relford pursued. "You shall tell your story there. Miss Cheswick, we will also ask your presence."

He reached out an unshaking hand and took the mail-bag. Then he walked into the house with the young couple at his back. Zyra gave Saywood one glance, and he saw tears in her eyes. Her sympathy, too, went out to the Captain strongly.

Relford went on, reached his private room, motioned the others to seats and then himself sat down with the bag before him. The bloodstains no longer seemed to unnerve him, and he was the warrior gifted with new strength.

"Now," he directed, "your story."

It was told in full. Long before it was ended darkness had fallen. Once, a servant knocked and spoke of bringing lights, but she was ordered away curtly. When, however, all was told, she was as peremptorily recalled by an imperious ring. The coming of the light showed the Commandant calmer than he had been before. Time had restored his composure, and he might well have reminded an onlooker of the days when, in his younger years, he led men in successful battles.

"Affairs are, in a measure, on a new footing," he said, thoughtfully. "If there are no hidden men in the hills to the north, there is probably no Claggitt. The name was always a visionary one, for the few who pretended to use it definitely did not prove themselves sure of their ground. Never mind that! Saywood, I am not so sure we should look among the ranchers of Sunset Valley for the guilty ones."

"Where else can we look, sir?"

"We have given the hills to the north undue prominence, assuming that the outlaws must be there simply because it was a natural resort for desperadoes. There are lesser hills elsewhere. Southward, beyond the twenty miles of desert, there is abundant shelter for criminals."

"I had not considered that."

"It must be considered. It is hard to suspect the ranchers."

"Do you know them all?"

"Every man."

"That counts for something," admitted Saywood, disconcerted.

"It counts for much. I know them. Elderley, Simpson, Briggs, Ray, Kellerton, and the rest. How many have you seen?"

"Only Elderley and Briggs, who called here a few days ago."

"Would you," asked the Commandant, with his first smile, "suspect them?"

"It surely did not occur to me to do it."

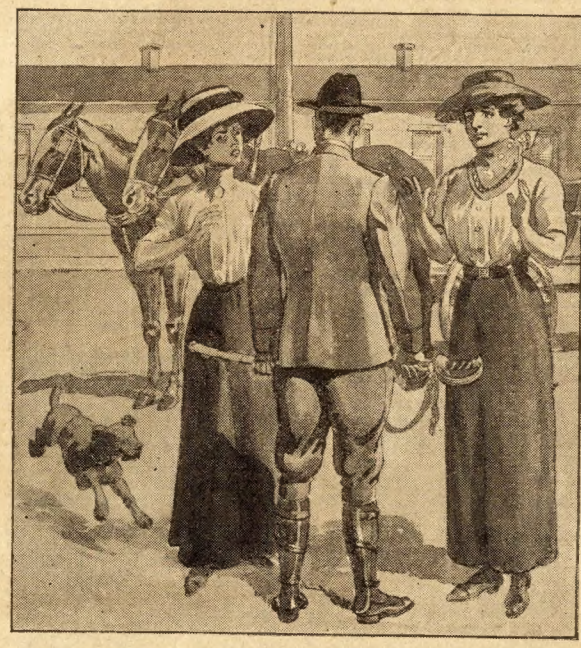
"Honest, hard-working ranchers. For years they have been dropping in here for a chat, and I have dined at their homes. I have seen their women and children, for every rancher there is a married man—grave, sedate, industrious men and good women!"

"Then we seem to be all at sea, sir."

"Hopelessly, Mr. Saywood. But not defeated—no, by heavens, sir! not defeated. I'll have my men in saddle and the whole country shall be scoured. This last outrage cannot be dropped. When the Government mail is meddled with the final straw has been added to Fort Despair's burden. That dead carrier in the hills shall be avenged, and when I have his murderer in my grasp I'll hang him without formality of law!"

He rose, and, understanding that the interview was terminated, his companions did the same. Relford turned to Zyra with a kindly smile.

"Little girl," he said, gently. "I am sorry you have been mixed up with this, for you lack the nerves of an old war-horse. Pray do not let it haunt your rest. Forget all tragedy, and sleep well."



"You!" she exclaimed, "you are that man!"

He held out his hand, and the girl impulsively grasped and carried it to her lips.

"I could ask for no better benediction," she replied.

Leaving the mail-bag with the Captain, the young couple went out of the room. Saywood would gladly have had a parting word with Zyra, but she flitted away from him with rapid steps, and he was left to himself.

He was soon in his own quarters and engaged with his supper. Griffen eyed him closely and made some advances toward conversation, but the Lieutenant was taciturn, and he was rebuffed. Afterward Saywood smoked in his sleeping-room and meditated. The day had seen some advance made toward clearing up the mystery of Fort Despair, but the mystery still hung darkly over the post. He had come back strong in the belief that he had only to sift Sunset Valley bare and all would be revealed, but Relford's decision staggered him.

Was it possible that the well-regarded ranchers could be guilty? He was not yet ready to acquit them. He had been at the post long enough to know that Captain Relford was no longer the iron hero who had led his men in the great war, and, later, in the Apache forays. The present night had only emphasized the fact that the Commandant's nerves had gone astray. Perhaps the breakdown was more general—in fact, he was sure of it.

His decision was, first, that the outlawry near the garrison could never have got fully under way had Relford been his old self, and, secondly, that the same falling off of the mental powers that had led to Relford's failure to catch the criminals might now be responsible for his inclination to acquit the ranchers of suspicion. Clearly, he must, as far as was in keeping with military discipline, act on his own judgment, not the Captain's.

While he pondered there was a light knock at the door. He bade the applicant enter, but, instead, the knock was repeated. He rose and himself opened the barrier. Light in hand, Estelle Relford was at the threshold.

A smile of greeting began to dawn on Saywood's face, but as quickly died away. His eyes told him it was not a time for smiling. The Commandant's daughter was very pale, and her eyes met his with a something in them that worried him. His spirits fell in pity that was vague and bewildered. Why was she there?

Each looked at the other in silence—Saywood because he was surprised, and the girl for a reason he could not comprehend. Her expression, the singular light in her eyes, the irresolute pose of her figure were each and all past his understanding, but she suddenly put forth her free hand and grasped the side of the doorway.

"I came—I came to tell you——"

Her voice was but little more than a whisper, and that little died away wholly. She wavered, her dull eyes were full of a something like fear, and he stirred and caught at her arm.

"Miss Relford," he exclaimed, "you are ill! Pray, what can I do? Whom shall I call——"

The weak voice interrupted.

"I came to tell you that, tonight——"

She was true to a fixed purpose, but her physical powers overmastered her mind. She began to sink in his grasp.

"Tonight, tonight!"

There was more force in what she said, a sort of painful intensity, but the effort was the ebb-tide of her strength. Her voice died away, her eyes closed, and she lay in his arms in a swoon.

Saywood was frightened, perplexed, and freshly bewildered. She was unconscious, and he felt his ability unequal to the occasion. What was he to do? The hour was not late, but she was in his house, and nobody was within call but Griffen. The idea that publicity must be avoided swept over the Lieutenant strongly.

He sought for light as to his course and decided. He lifted her easily and carried her toward the front door. It was a great relief when he found officers' row deserted. He left the door quickly and moved toward Captain Relford's house. Light was inside, and he breathed a sigh of relief as he saw Zyra passing through the hall. Pushing his way in, he stood before the second girl with his seemingly lifeless burden, causing consternation by his appearance.

"She has fainted!" he exclaimed. "I don't know why—perhaps the excitement——"

The explanation appeared feeble to him, and he dropped it. For a brief space Zyra wavered as noticeably as himself, but she rallied with commendable quickness.

"The parlor!" she said, hurriedly. "I'll ring for the servants. Will you go for the post surgeon?"

"I will!"

Saywood said it with fervor, glad to be relieved of further embarrassment. His bachelor life had held no fainting women, and he felt himself helpless and useless. But he could go for a doctor. He placed his burden in a chair, saw Zyra ring, heard the distant tinkle of the bell, and then ran out of the house.

The surgeon's home was not far away, and as he was there the Lieutenant soon had him on the scene. Zyra was busy with the patient, and after a feeble masculine look Saywood retreated to the piazza. There he gave himself up to wonder.

Why had Estelle come to him? Why had she fainted? He recalled that she had not seemed to be in good health of late—probably that explained something, but not all.

"Why," he puzzled, "did she come to me? What was it she said? Something about having come to me because—but she didn't say what. There was something about tonight. I wonder what that meant? Probably nothing. 'Tonight!' She must have spoken at random. She was ill. Still, that doesn't explain why she came to my house. Confound it! I am all balled up. Can't understand, so what's the use? Poor girl! I hope I can do something more for her."

It was half an hour later when the surgeon came out.

"Is she still living?" asked the unhappy Lieutenant, quickly.

"She will outlive most of the people at this post," replied the medical man, with indulgent patience. "Fainted! Been a trifle ailing for some time. Go home and get your sleep, Saywood. Nothing more to be done here. Pack off with you!"

Saywood was not reluctant to go, and as he reached his room he became aware that the day's labor and mental anxiety had left its mark. He was tired, desperately tired. He yawned and proceeded to undress.

Stretched out on the bed he found himself growing confused by the approach of sleep.

"Wonder what she meant?" he mused, stupidly. "She wanted to tell me—what? Something, and its refrain was tonight, tonight! I wonder why?"

And then he slept.

CHAPTER XIII.

A BAD NIGHT.

It was an odd experience. Hands seemed to be fumbling at him. He was lifted. Angry at being disturbed and brought out of slumber he tried to shake off the restraint, only to learn that it was far more extensive than he had supposed. Something held his legs together. Something held his wrists together. Something muffled his voice when he would have called out in his wrath. In every way he was restrained of liberty and speech. And his eyes were bandaged.

Such was Lieutenant Saywood's awakening. A voice stole in upon his meditations.

"It's got to be done tonight!"

There was something singularly reminiscent about that remark. He had heard it before, or something like it. Tonight! That much rang very familiar. Yes, and, at last, he recalled Estelle Relford's visit. She had wanted to tell him something, and the refrain had been "tonight." He wondered if there was any connection between her words and the present situation.

Now he was fully awake, fully aroused to the fact that mischief was afoot. He was being carried somewhere. He struggled to free himself, but with such a mesh of entanglements a child might have defied his random squirmings.

There was a harsh grating along his spinal column. He was being shoved along something, and as the air struck his flesh a trifle more freshly he discovered by deduction what the something was.

He was being shoved out of the window. That did not please him, and he writhed again, but futilely. On he went, and he expected a forward pitch that would end in collision with the ground and bring him a broken neck.

Instead, he began to swing pendulum-like, while something hugged him tight at various points. He was being lowered with a rope.

If he could only call for help. Where was Griffen? Where were his other friends? This was a kidnaping game, and he recalled something that dated back to the town of Cutlip. The mysterious letter-writer had assured him that if he went to Fort Despair he would be killed. For the first time he began to believe. Enemies had him in their power, and he was tied up completely. He had been told to beware of the garrison. He had ignored the warning and come. Now—now—what?

He touched the earth rather gently, and then something thumped down upon him—the loose end of the rope. Somebody closed hands upon him, and then, as an afterthought, sat upon his shoulder, which was a serious breach of good manners.

Time passed; perhaps two minutes. Then footsteps sounded and he was lifted and borne away. He wondered where. Theoretically, it would be impossible to pass the sentries, but he was not certain that the journey would be stopped by such means.

The success of the kidnaping, thus far, made him ready to believe that he would be lugged off like a sack of grain bound for market. He began to look ahead to the end of the journey. His mind, befogged at the start, was now clear, and it was reasonably plain to him that he was in the hands of the gang that made life near the garrison uncertain. If they had him, it could be for only one

purpose. He had been told that death awaited him at the garrison.

Tramp!—the kidnapers went on. He was lifted over the back fence. He mentally measured the distance to the sentry line, curious to see what would happen there. A hundred yards. When they reacned that point——

He slipped. He fell to the ground with a heavy thump that jarred his nerves sharply. He heard exclamations, angry outcries, blows. Oh! for liberty at that moment! He struggled, but as vainly as before. He was to have no part in what was transpiring. Silence! Inactivity! He was alone. No voices reached him, no one trod noticeably, and nobody touched him. He had been left to himself. Why?

Presently there were other steps and hands were laid upon him again. At first they were investigating hands, but his bonds began to fall away. His arms were freed, then his legs. The bandage was cast from his eyes, and then from his mouth.

"Shades of D. Boone! Is it you, Boy Saywood?"

The Lieutenant sat up quickly. Nat Brief was there.

"I thought it before," added the scout, "but I didn't feel so awful sure. Shades of D. Boone!"

"What in blazes does this mean?" fumed Saywood, angrily.

"You should know better than me, boy, but I remember a letter that was writ. Didn't I tell you to look alive? Stabbed in the house of your friends! That's figurative, boy, for you ain't stabbed, and it was from your own house you was took."

Saywood leaped to his feet. "Who did it? Where are they?" he demanded.

"Don't know who did it. They are gone, straight through your sentry line. Watchful guards you must have, for there was no challenge, and the only hullabaloo was made by me."

"Escaped, have they? Tell me all you know, Nat."

"Well, Boy Saywood, they give me a real fine bed to sleep in at a tailor's house, but of all the mean, lousy, uncomfortable places to sleep a bed is the worst, and I got out. Maybe I'd have stuck to it, for I am nat'rally a polite feller, but I had it in my mind big as a bull buffler that I ought to be near you, boy. Suspected they would play mischief with you, an' you ain't so weather wise as you might be. Leastwise, so I feared, and events has proved it."

"Well?"

"I come this way jest in time to see somebody bein' lowered out of your room winder like a pack from a mule's back. I waited a bit, but I rather opined it was you, so I sailed in. Being there was only three of them the fight was short. They run, an' me after them. I relied upon your sentry, but—pah! The last I see of your kidnapers they was goin' for country regions like antelopes."

"Let's look to the sentry post."

They moved that way just in time to see the man on the next post stand peering about him. He seemed to be trying to discover something he could not find. Just then the watch-call started from the guardhouse.

"Number One! Half past one o'clock. All's well!"

The call passed from man to man until it reached the peering sentry. He was quick and eager.

"Number Five! Half past one o'clock. All's well!"

Next it was the routine duty of Number Six to call, but silence was in that quarter. Saywood was about to press forward, but changed his mind and decided to let the usual course of action prevail.

Five repeated his call, waited to see that it was fruitless, and then wheeled and cried out to Number Four.

"Corporal of the guard!"

The new call went on to the guardhouse, and quickly after the Corporal came with long steps.

"What is it, Five?" he demanded.

"There is no call from Six, sir, and I can't see him."

"Who is he?"

"Peter Kesley, sir."

"I'll see to Peter."

The Corporal walked the entire length of Six's post, and there met Seven. That man had not seen Six for some minutes.

Saywood made his appearance, and it was soon proved that the silent sentry was gone. The Lieutenant had thought he might be found near at hand, bound and gagged, but this was a mistake. The man was surely gone.

"No great loss," grumbled the Corporal. "Never liked him, but if we are to have deserters like this it will be a bad example."

Saywood did not see fit to explain then, but he had a duty to perform. Lieutenant Morcratz was officer of the day, and report should be made to him. Outstripping the Corporal, Saywood took his way to his fellow officer's quarters. A light was burning, and he walked in without ceremony and found Morcratz reading at his ease. He looked up, and his face grew cold as he saw who had come.

"Pardon me, Morcratz," said the visitor, amicably, "but you will soon have the Corporal here to tell you that a sentry has deserted his post, but I also have something to report."

The story was soon told. Morcratz listened from beginning to end without comment, though his expression was neither startled nor sympathetic. As Saywood ended his brother officer smiled sarcastically, even irritatingly, at him.

"You seem to be a devil of a fellow for sensations," was the disagreeable comment.

"Is that your official or private opinion?" Saywood retorted curtly.

"It is merely a grasping at circumstances. I am led to wonder what will happen next, now you are at the post. Don't take that in ill will, Saywood. Some men have a faculty for getting into messes. That is the sort that usually brings good results, instead of barren failures. Things are beginning to hum at the old garrison."

It was a singular mixture of sarcasm and compliment, as if the speaker wanted to be wholly irritating, but dared not indulge too freely, so the useless compliments were tossed in like a bone to a dog.

"No doubt all is plain to one of your quick penetration and devotion to duty," Saywood returned, calmly.

"I can see a good deal."

"I will make a note of the fact."

The arrival of the Corporal interrupted this exchange of dubious official courtesy, and Saywood promptly went away. Nat Brief joined him outside.

"Heard it all, saw it all," observed the scout, evenly. "Winder was open. Say, boy, that Morcratz loves you some heaps."

"His frame of mind is plain, but not the cause of it."

"Maybe your previous diagnosis is correct, and it may be only jealousy, as you hinted, but I ain't sure. I don't like that Morcratz enough to keep me awake o' nights. Boy, look sharp that he don't do you a mighty bad trick. Look out for him!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RANCHER'S WOMEN.

They walked on together, still discussing Morcratz.

"I am wondering," said Saywood, "whether it was wholly a surprise when I told him of my experiences. He has rather a neat command of his emotions, but he was confounded cool."

"Never turned a whisker of his eyelids," Nat agreed. "The man feels bitter toward you, but his reasons I don't know. Now, about tomorrer. I understand you go back to the hills."

"Captain Relford had said he will send me at the head of a party to take up the trail and learn where the mail-carrier was shot. Incidentally, his body is to be brought in."

"Count me out! I reckon I can do better work elsewhere, an' that is right in Sunset Valley. Metterson will stay here for now. When I appear in the valley I shall pretend to be agent for a new reapin' machine."

"Possibly it will be a device that will deceive them."

"It will, unless I am recognized as the man seen in the hills. If I make my trick good I'll turn them ranchers inside out, and soon be able to tell you who killed the mail-carrier. Metterson will ride back and forth, so me and you can compare items."

"You did not see the men distinctly who faced us at the camp fire. They were a hundred yards away, and their hats were pulled down over their eyes—"

"Fact, an' maybe some wore false beards, too. Small matter, though. Boy Saywood, cast your memory back to the time in your real boyhood when I give you lessons in practical life. One of them was this: A chap on horseback has his mannerism jest as much as when he's on foot. Each and every man has his peculiar, characteristic way o' doin' things in saddle. The way he pulls on the rein, the way he sets, the way he moves, the way he carries his legs alongside his mount, the way he moves his arms—all are his ways, and nobody else's. No two riders do these things alike. Each one has his little oddities. Do ye remember that lesson, boy?"

"Yes, and I have profited by it in a measure, thought not as much as my teacher might wish. I'm aware you have a singular gift for reading such obscure signs."

"I'll use that gift today. Most sartainly I can't recognize all o' them riders in that fashion, but some I have spotted. Let me see them in saddle, an' I shall have a report to bring you. Now, boy, Captain Relford took our friend Metterson into his house last night, as his guest. After this, see to it that Metterson sleeps in your house. Fix it so no intruder can have the clear sweep them rats had tonight."

"If circumstances make it easy I will suggest as much to the Commandant, but I won't be so cowardly as to ask for the Englishman's presence unless events work that way."

"Your hive should be a beehive o' friends. Your striker is one——"

"My striker! What about him? He has not been visible in this affair. I'll look for him."

They entered the house hurriedly, and Griffen was found on his bed, bound and gagged. A faint odor of chloroform suggested that Saywood, himself, might have been drugged before he was bound. Previously, he had wondered that he had not awakened until fully tied up. Griffen could tell absolutely nothing of value. He had become conscious only to find himself helpless, and that was the extent of his information.

"I'll bet my life," he said, after some more emphatic comments, "that that infernal striker for the Captain—that blamed Wesley——"

There was a knock at the door.

"Come!" said the Lieutenant promptly.

The door opened and Wesley was seen. One swift glance showed Saywood that the servant was fully dressed, his collar being on and his tie well knotted. Wesley saluted irreproachably.

"Compliments of Captain Relford, sir, and he would be pleased to see you at his quarters," said the striker.

"Say to him that I will be there at once. Thank you, Wesley."

Whether or not Wesley suspected that the last three words bordered on sarcasm did not appear. He again saluted, and walked away lightly for a man of his size.

"The blasted, sneakin' low-lived dog!" growled Griffen. "He was one of them who did it."

Saywood looked at Nat Brief, but that astute person was rubbing his chin meditatively and appeared to be deep in thought. No more was said, and they obeyed the call to Relford's presence.

They found the Commandant pacing his room with long, heavy steps, and his face, pale on a recent occasion, was now flushed with anger. He received them with courtesy, but when he took up the latest mystery his speech was intemperate. The way in which matters were going at the post was enough to upset all nerves, and he was certainly upset. He had the story in detail, but as neither Saywood nor Brief could give particulars that cleared away the mystery, nothing enlightening came of the interview. Both were in a sober mood when they went away.

"Lucky you are here, boy," remarked Nat. "The Captain piled up glory in the old Apache days, but he ain't got the brisk mental grip on things he had once. You have. Go in and win!"

At the break of day Saywood and fifteen troopers left the post, but early as they were, Nat Brief was ahead of them. He was already on his way to Sunset Valley.

Before noon half of the blue-coats returned with the body of the mail-carrier, but the day passed without signs of the Lieutenant and his detail. It semed that Metterson was the only optimistic person among those who waited. The others had seen parties go after the outlaws and come home baffled. They expected it now.

Shortly after night fell Saywood led his men back. Only the Commandant heard his report, but it was known that the trail of the dead mail-carrier had been followed a short distance and then lost. At the present, the Lieutenant had failed as others had done before him.

The following day a fresh detail under Corporal Sinnott, an expert trailer, went out. Saywood had asked for permission to lead the party, but Relford believed he was over-weary, so he was given his recurring work as officer of the day.

He inquired after Estelle, and was told that she was ill and in her room. The Lieutenant, longing to talk with her, was disappointed. Why had she come to him the eventful evening? Why had she fainted? What had she been about to say when overcome by her weakness? She had merely stated that she desired to inform him that—what? And why had she so persistently repeated "Tonight, tonight!"

The impression would not down that she had somehow gained tidings of the intended attack upon him, and had wished to warn him.

Several hours passed uneventfully. During a lull in his duties the Lieutenant was in his room when a buckboard crossed the sentry line. It was nothing new, for the people from the valley occasionally came for business or relaxation. Saywood chanced to see the arrival, and noticed that two women and a man were the visitors. Undoubtedly they were known, for they passed the line after a few words with the Corporal.

Half an hour later the Lieutenant went outside. He had temporarily forgotten the strangers, but as he now saw them standing by their team a shade of interest presented itself. As they must be from the ranching region he wanted a nearer look at them. He went to where they stood, and the man of the party greeted him cheerfully.

"Dropped in to see if we could sell you a diamond necklace," he said, facetiously. "Have it with you?" Saywood asked, in the same vein.

"Hidden in the off hoss's ear," and the man grinned. "We are from Sunset Valley, and we have lots of such trinkets. They grow on trees there."

"Very pleasant for you. Let me see. Were you not here a week or so ago?"

"Yes. Drove in with Mr. Elderley. He's my boss."

"And my brother," added one of the women, with a show of pride. "I am Jane Elderley. This is Mrs. Elderley."

Thus introduced, the officer acknowledged the acquaintance in due form. Under the mask of a smile he eyed the three analytically. The man was, he thought, of no importance, being an ordinary laborer. The women were of a higher order of intelligence, and each of distinct individuality. Miss Jane was tall, bony, and rather masculine. Mrs. Elderley was more slight, and delicate and nervous.

"I like to take a squint at the garrison, now and then," Jane proceeded volubly. "Sort of a change, you see. Still, I wouldn't live here for a million dollars. I'd die with nothing but that old desert yonder to look at. In the valley we have grass, trees, flowers. This is a mighty barren region, mister."

"You forget, sister," reminded Mrs. Elderley, "that soldiers are always busy with their official duties."

"Don't look like it to me. See those privates over there! Idling! See those officers! Idling!"

"Yet," persisted the second lady, pleasantly, "they are nominally on duty, I think."

"When I'm on duty I'm at work!" asserted Jane. "Then—then things hum! Land sakes, I can't work sitting still, nor killing time! But that isn't here nor there. Mr. Officer, I want to see the great leading feature of you menagerie, the Barnum curiosity, the romantic man who has had an adventure here."

Mrs. Elderley pulled at her companion's sleeve. "Don't be foolish, Jane!" she urged. "Come, let us go."

"May I ask," returned the Lieutenant, "whom do you wish to see?"

"Why, the chief curiosity—that Saywood of yours."

"I am Saywood."

He made the announcement smilingly, but the result astonished him. Mrs. Elderley gave a little gasp and shriek and shrank back, a startled look in her eyes.

"You!" she exclaimed. "You are—that man!"

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

The Kitchener Way.

The clever John Galsworthy, during his visit here not long ago, was asked by an American friend what was thought over in England of Lord Kitchener's chances of success in straightening out the political snarls which the too easy-going rule of Sir Eldon Gorst had permitted to appear in the valley of the Nile, where the victor of Omdurman and Khartoum now has gone as British agent.

"We are all convinced he will 'make good,' as your pleasantly-expressive language puts it," replied the novelist-dramatist. "'K. of K.' will get to the root of the trouble in short order, and he has a little way, once he sees what's to be done, of achieving results that are as final as they are prompt. I suppose there never was a man with a keener knack of asking the one most pertinent question, concerning any riddle he has to solve—and with not a superfluous word.

"They tell a tale about him out in Calcutta and Simla which will show you what I mean. During some construction work in Nepael, a subaltern in charge of one gang had the misfortune to lose three native workmen through a premature blast. He instantly telegraphed in: 'Regret to report killing three laborers, dynamite accident.' As luck would have it, Kitchener was in headquarters when the wire reached there, and what do you suppose he answered? Merely: 'Do you need more dynamite?'

"Now he wasn't unappreciative of the loss of three human lives, and nothing was further from his mind than an attempted witticism. It was only that he had his whole heart in the work under hand, as he always has. Laborers, he knew, were to be had for the asking; dynamite had to be transported; transportation meant delay; therefore get out after the one essential detail immediately. That's Kitchener's way."

Optimistic.

Miners are among the most heroic people in the world. Danger is always beside them, and they are schooled to believe that any time they will come face to face with death. The result of this is that they are humorous in their boldness.

In one of the mines of Pennsylvania there was a cave-in which imprisoned a miner named Jack Thornton. The accident happened on Friday afternoon, and the fellow laborers of the entombed man set to work at once to dig him out. It was not until Sunday morning, however, that they reached his prison chamber, and by this time they were wondering whether he had been suffocated or starved to death. One of them stuck his head through the aperture made by the picks of the rescuers and called out:

"Jack, are you all right?"

"All right," came the reply; and then after a pause, "What day is this?"

"Sunday," answered the friend.

"Gee!" exclaimed Jack, "I'm glad of that. That was one Saturday night when those saloon-keepers didn't get my wages."

Didn't Fit.

"Ma, what does d. d. stand for?"

"Doctor of divinity, my dear. Don't they teach you the common abbreviations in school?"

"Oh, yes! but that doesn't seem to sound right here."

"Read it out loud, my dear."

My Dear (reading)—"Witness—I heard the defendant say, 'I'll make you suffer for this. I'll be doctor of divinity if I don't.'"

A SWEETHEART'S SECRET

Or, THE HOUSE ON THE MARSH

By T. C. HARBAUGH

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CHAPTER XVII.

CRACKING A HARD NUT.

IT WAS a week before Claudia came out of the strange trance into which she had been thrown on the night I found her near the hunting lodge. That she had been attacked by some person was known to all, but the identity of her assailant was still a mystery. All through her mental darkness we watched carefully over her, hoping for some light, but she lingered on, and when reason did return she was as silent as the fabled Sphinx. The hands which had clutched her throat seemed to have had a grip of steel. Their vengeance had been something terrible, and I shuddered to think that Claudia had been thrust close to the precipice of the unknown world.

I remembered that I had seen John Groves and the big dog of the estate going toward the lodge, but I could not associate him with the almost tragedy, despite the fact that I knew him to be one of the vilest of earth's creatures. It was not his hand that had throttled my love; the prints of fingers on her throat did not indicate this, so I dismissed the burly servant from the catalogue of suspects.

Two mysteries remained in addition to Claudia's assailant—the one of the two wills, and the footprints at the waterfall where I had discovered the dead body of the man with the white mice. Brutus Bobbs, the little constable, had not troubled me since his visit to Marshedge, when he proclaimed himself the implacable enemy of Jason Sellers, with whom at one time he had been hand-in-glove.

Whenever I broached the subje of the assault at the lodge to Claudia she side-tracked me in a way that was perplexing. I became confident that she knew who had attacked her, but I could not imagine why she refused to speak. Of Jason Sellers I had seen nothing since my release from his house, and I was not desirous of encountering him.

"Some day," I said to myself, "Claudia will reveal all," and I waited with feelings impossible to describe.

She occupied much of her time playing with the two white mice which I had found beside Brawn's body. They tricked for her with the same pleasure they had assumed under their dead owner's authority, and more than once I turned away and silently left the almost pitiful scene.

On the last day of the week, as I was descending the broad stair which t minated in the spacious front hall, I came face to face with Mossy Phipps. The girl drew hastily back, as if she would have avoided me, but I sprang down the flight and interrupted her. She was quite pale; indeed, ever since the night of Claudia's almost fatal adventure her face had known a pasty pallor which must have been noticed by every one.

"One moment, Mossy!" cried I, as she trembled in my presence. "I want to see you."

I opened the door leading into the library and motioned her to enter. She would have drawn back even then, but my gaze was centered on her face, and she reluctantly followed me.

"I know nothing about it, Mr. Roland!" she exclaimed, as she dropped with a deep sigh into my uncle's arm-chair. "I don't know what caused Miss Claudia's illness."

"You will wait till I have sought to extract such information from you," I replied, with sternness.

"Oh, I thought you wanted to know about that."

"I do, and when I have reached that subject you may make what explanations you see fit."

She made no reply to this. I took a chair facing the silent girl, and for half a minute studied her.

"You have clandestine meetings," said I.

"What? I?"

"You, Miss Phipps."

"I have told you that I do not like John Groves, though we have been engaged."

"I have not even suggested the name of Groves," I answered, with a smile. "You go off at a tangent, I see."

"Pardon me. You once spoke of his declaration that he intended to make me his wife, and I thought you were coming back to that perplexing subject."

"On a certain night not long ago you met a man at the bridge that spans Sunny Rill."

"I?"

"Why not? Some people have excellent eyes, and when you pass near them they are apt to make use of them."

She seemed to draw within herself and some color came back to her face.

"Whom did I meet at the bridge?" she exclaimed.

"A man who, after parting with you, went straight to Jason Sellers's house."

If I expected to see the girl crimson with guilt, I was deceived, for her lips came together, and I knew that she was bracing herself for a trial of some kind.

"You have not denied the accusation, Mossy," said I.

"You would not believe me if I did."

"That I would not. The man handed you a package which you carried back to Marshedge."

"That is my business," she flared up. She was getting her old nerve again.

"Now," said I, still watching her closely, "if you will hand me that package, we might quit even."

She tried to rise, but, leaning forward, I pushed her gently but with firmness back into the chair.

"Not yet!" I cried, tauntingly. "I have not done with you, Miss Phipps."

"How dare you!" and her eyes flashed balefully. "You are here not by any right you may have, but by the sufferance of the man who owns Marshedge, Jason Sellers."

"The man for whom you have set your cap, eh?"

"What is that to you?" and she sprang up before I could detain her. "You have been arrested for murder. You have escaped the gallows by the theft of evidence. I never saw a man like you, Roland Marshall. If I had my way you should not spend another night under this roof."

"Perhaps it is well that you have no authority here," I laughed, while her face went white once more. "But don't lose your head, girl. Put out your foot."

She looked at me as though the look could kill. It was a sudden inspiration that prompted my demand.

"I will not be insulted!" she exclaimed. "You're a beast!"

She was reaching that point at which I longed to see her.

"Why should I put out my foot?" she cried, lifting her head haughtily. "You think you have made an astounding discovery."

"Do you always wear your own shoes, Mossy?"

"In the name of Heaven, whose shoes should I wear?"

"Those that fit your feet."

With a proud curling of her lips she moved toward the door, but she did not know that upon entering the room I had turned the key and transferred it to my pocket.

"You've locked me in, 'reptile!" she cried, when she discovered that she was held captive.

"Why not?"

"Open that door!" and I saw her hand move swiftly toward her bosom. "I will not be subjected to your vileness. If you do not——"

"You will show your teeth?"

"More than my teeth!" leaped from her throat, and the next second she stood before me with uplifted hand, the white fingers of which encircled the black hilt of a dagger.

"You have the key, Roland Marshall," she went on. "You came across the sea and murdered your uncle. I have friends who will resent any insult to me. I am not helpless. Open that door!"

Still eying her I went forward and put the key into the lock. She gave me a look which lingers to this day, and walked across the carpet with the tread of the stealthy leopardess.

"No thanks," she said in a hiss, as she crossed the threshold. "Remember! I shall be mistress of Marshedge ere long, and then you quit the place never to return."

I could not keep back the words that sprang to my lips.

"And when you are mistress of Marshedge," cried I, "see that you wear your own shoes when you go down to the waterfall. More than this, my hot-headed lady, perhaps you can tell me what became of the other white mouse."

It was a shot partially at random, but it went home.

"You lie!" she exclaimed, leaning toward me with the dagger gleaming below her hand. "I hurl your lie back into your teeth, Roland Marshall. The other white mouse?"

"Yes, there were three," said I irritatingly calm. "You have told me that you don't like mice, especially white ones. What became of the third one?"

I thought she would leap at me with the fury of a tigress, and put up my hand to ward off the steel; but suddenly she turned toward the staircase and threw me a last look. She was midway on the flight when I stepped into the hall and looked up. There she stood, her feet firmly set on the stair carpet and her lithe body bent downward as if she waited for me with all the suppleness of her kin.

I believed that I had driven a wedge into the mystery of the waterfall, and I felt that the dagger which Phipps held in her white hand was the one that had slain my Uncle Trajan. And while I watched her, she went slowly up the stair and vanished on the floor above.

"More than my teeth!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BURIED BLADE.

I now realized that there was little less than an armed truce at Marshedge. Miss Phipps had shown her teeth, and I believed that the denouement of the drama which had been enacted ever since my return to the house on the marsh could not be far off. Claudia had recovered from the assault at the hunting lodge, but her lips were still sealed. If she had recognized her assailant she was shielding him, but why?

Jenkins, the second maid, came to me a few hours after my encounter with the sleep-walker in the library and beckoned me into the parlor. There was something mysterious in the maid's mien.

"I have made a strange discovery, Mr. Roland," she began in low tones. "It was last night."

I knew I could rely upon Jenkins, for she had proved her trustfulness in the past, and I waited eagerly for her declaration.

"I don't go out often after dark, you know," she proceeded. "Not that I have fears of anything about the premises, but because I am not a night bird."

"Like Mossy?" I suggested.

"That is it, Mr. Roland—like Mossy. The girl had one of her old trances last night."

"Took another stroll in her sleep, did she?"

"Yes. I was in the back garden when I caught sight of her. She must have come out of the house through the rear door. My first act upon seeing her was to secrete myself among the azaleas, though I need not have taken that precaution, owing to Mossy's condition. She passed quite near me. I followed her to the little gate which opens upon the marsh road, and she led me a merry chase. All at once she turned from the road, and came back to turn again into the wood and proceed toward the cataract. My curiosity was on edge by this time, and I went after her. She avoided all obstructions, as though she were wide awake, and what was my surprise when I saw her stoop over a certain spot almost within the area of spray which the water throws out.

"I approached quite near, watching Mossy all the time. She was evidently burying something in the soft ground there, but as her back was turned to me I could not see everything. She completed her task at last and, gathering up her skirts, moved toward the house."

"What did you find?" I asked, as Jenkins concluded. "Of course you investigated?"

"I did not, Mr. Roland. If Mossy really buried anything there, it must be there yet."

I was perplexed at the maid's failure to carry out her adventure. She might have done so, for if the sleep-walker had planted anything where she had been seen she might have removed it or some other person might have robbed her.

Dismissing Jenkins as soon as possible, I left the house in the last rays of the sun and hurried to the cataract. Jenkins had located the spot so clearly that I could not mistake it, and in a short time I reached my destination. It was a lonely though beautiful locality, with the pretty waterfall to give increased loveliness to it, but the silvery spray and the music made by the cataract had now no charm for me.

A slight disturbance of the ground guided me to the sought-for spot, and in another moment I was on my knees making a little excavation. All at once my hand touched something which was not earth. I had been pricked as with a needle, and, withdrawing my hand, saw a spot of red at the tip of one finger. This only goaded me to further work and in a few minutes I held in my hand the black-hilted dagger which I had taken from its place of concealment in the old hunting lodge.

Replacing the tumbled soil as well as I could, I hastened back to the house with my prize. If Mossy had faced me with that same steel, I was its possessor now. Jenkins encountered me as I entered the hall, and I answered her look with a nod.

Looking from the window of my room over marsh and sea, I saw the day fade and heard the last twitter of the birds among the rank foliage. The old house grew still.

"Mr. Roland?" suddenly rang in my ears.

I sprang to my feet and opened the door. Jenkins was there with dilated eyes.

"He's down below!" she exclaimed.

"Who is, Jenkins?"

"Jason Sellers."

I started at mention of the name, and then looked again into the maid's face.

"Is he alone, Jenkins?"

"Quite alone—in the library."

My footsteps were soon sounding on the stair, and the following moment I opened the door and once more stood face to face with the man I so cordially hated. He had taken possession of my dead uncle's chair, and looked like the monarch of all he surveyed.

"I hardly expected this pleasure," he said, breaking the silence between us. "I thought perhaps you were gone."

His voice was cold and hard.

"I have already informed you that I would not leave Marshedge till I was ready," I answered, returning his look with compound interest. "You had no right to think that you would not find me here."

"I believe we might compromise the situation," he resumed, subduing his passion a trifle. "I have no wish to become a harsh landlord, Mr. Marshall. As you know, Marshedge belongs to me, and——"

"You have already shown me alleged written proof of this," I interrupted.

"The deed? Yes. You do not dispute that, eh?"

"I do not dispute the deed as it is written, but I might ask whether Marshedge was conveyed to you of the conveyor's own free will."

The face of my foe went white instantly.

"If the dead could speak——"

"The dead might solve more than one mystery," I broke in. "As you may know, Jason Sellers, there are two wills."

"Two wills?" he echoed, leaning toward me with his keen eyes riveted upon my face.

"Two wills. One is now in this house, the other in the cabinet in your library."

He got upon his feet with irritating deliberation.

"How know you this?" he demanded.

"I have seen both wills. You remember that you once told me that there was no will."

He made no reply.

"Now," I proceeded, as my gorge rose, "by the will which is now at Marshedge you inherit the estate, provided Claudia remained away a certain length of time. Does not the other will, the one in your possession, give the whole estate to her without equivocation?"

He flushed crimson.

"You are insinuating!" he almost roared. "That I must be faced by a plotter under my own roof is infamous."

"But isn't it true, Jason Sellers? Either the will which Claudia found when she was guided by the ghostly hand of my murdered uncle is a forgery, or it was drawn from the dead man by arts which a man like yourself would practice. Tell me the truth, Jason Sellers. Haven't you got the real true will which gives all to Claudia and aren't you withholding it for a devilish purpose? The will upon a certain contingency, I mean the one Claudia found, gives you the house on the marsh, but the one in your cabinet is the one which came from the hand of Trajan Marshall of his own free will."

I half expected the man to launch himself upon me with the fury of a Nemean lion. He went red and white by turns, and at last changed his hues to purple with the facility of the chameleon. He stood grasping the arm of the chair whilst he glared at me, and I knew that my arrow had penetrated his armor.

"You lie!" suddenly leaped from his lips in lightninglike flashings. "I will not put up with such a tenant as yourself. I will invoke the law in my behalf. I—I——"

I laughed at his insensate madness.

"Very well," I replied. "There is some justice in law. And whilst you are seeking to dispossess me, invoke the same law to discover who killed Trajan Marshall and why. You seem to be the main beneficiary, Jason Sellers. When I went out into the world with the wanderlust tugging at my heart, all was sunshine here. I came back with the shadow of murder hovering over this house. Claudia was gone, having exiled herself rather than become your wife. The blow was struck the night of my return, and I was arrested for the crime. There is evidence that ere my uncle died his heart softened toward the girl whom he had raised. I don't believe that he ever intended that Marshedge should fall into your hands. Who killed my uncle, Jason Sellers?"

"Ask the woman upstairs?" he hissed. "Ask the woman, I say, who was seen in the grounds that night, having stolen back after a long absence."

His words seemed daggers as they struck.

"I have been merciful," he went on. "I have withheld my hand out of pity for the girl who crossed the will of the man who gave her a home. Go and ask her who killed your uncle."

With the last syllable dying on his lips he passed me and reached the door.

"Do you accuse Claudia of murder?" I cried, darting forward, seeing nothing but the wretch who was looking at me like a victor.

"You have heard me?" he came back in stinging tones. "Go and ask her. She knows. Why did she come back that night? Has she told you all, Roland Marshall? You know she hasn't. You have suspected. More than that, you believe!"

This was more than I could stand. With a cry which seemed to sever my heartstrings, I leaped across the floor, and seizing Jason Sellers before he could lift a hand, I threw him through the door and heard him crash on the porch beyond.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHAT CLAUDIA SAW.

He went through the grove cursing and gesticulating like a demon, and I did not care to follow him. I had sent a shaft into a vulnerable part of his conscience, yet I feared that the man was not harmless, and there was no guessing what form his vengeance would take. Would he now destroy the will which I had discovered in his cabinet; leaving to us the one which gave him Marshedge upon certain conditions which had not been complied with?

Claudia met me in the hallway as I prepared to mount the stair. Her face was quite white, and I saw that the girl was laboring under great excitement.

"Roland," she said, in low tones, as she came forward and dropped her hand upon my arm, "I have overheard. You will forgive me, dear?"

"You are always forgiven in advance," I answered, leading her into the library.

"I do not see why I should longer keep the secret of that terrible night. It has gnawed into the secret recesses of my lone soul. I can not keep it longer."

She sat down in my uncle's chair and turned her pallid face toward me. I leaned against the table and waited for her to calm herself and proceed.

"You did see me in the marsh road that night with a light,' she began, with a perceptible effort. "It was the first time I had been back to Marshedge since my exilement. I could not remain away longer, and I knew that Mrs. Clarke, the good woman who took me in after my last days here, did so because she hated Jason Sellers. I resolved to come back and have an interview with Trajan Marshall, whose health was failing. It might be our last talk in this world, but it all turned out that I was to be disappointed.

"It was a dark night, as you may remember, though now and then the crescent moon shone forth, and that is why I carried the light. But for this I would not have been seen and recognized. Of your return I knew notning. Knowing your uncle's habit of remaining up late in this room, I was sure of finding him. The old house was very still. At the same time there was a ghostliness about it that sent a shiver to my inmost soul, and more than once I was on the eve of turning back. Would to Heaven I had carried out my resolutions!

"Bardolph, the watchdog, recognized me, but raised no alarm, for we had been good friends and playmates in the past. There was a light in the window, and I saw your uncle at the table looking over some papers which he had evidently taken from the cabinet in the wall. He was alone. The light which fell upon his face showed me a face of suffering. I could see how terribly he had changed during the years of my exilement. Not wishing to disturb him with the slightest noise, I crept through the shrubbery until I could have touched the window with my outstretched hand. He was totally oblivious of the presence of any one.

"Whilst I gazed from my place of concealment, a door behind him opened, and a white-robed figure glided into the room. I almost betrayed my presence with a cry. I had not forgotten the girl whom I had last seen at Marshedge. There is always some acute individuality connected with people that stands out prominently with them. It was thus with the first maid."

"With Mossy Phipps?" I ejaculated.

Claudia held up her hand to bind me to silence.

"Your uncle was unaware of the girl's entrance. He had not heard the catlike tread which characterized her upon that occasion. Eager to see everything I crept on and on, my breath. All at once I made a startling discovery, one which seemed to send a nameless chill through my blood. The girl was alseep! Though her eyes were wide open, I observed that she was in a somnambulistic trance such as I had often read about. She advanced across the floor, my eyes following her every movement and my soul seared with horror. I wanted to cry out, but my tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of my mouth, and I was powerless.

"Suddenly, and I wish to this day I could forget it, I saw Mossy draw a dagger from beneath her nightdress and lean over your unsuspecting uncle. In another second she had thrown his head back, and I saw the blade lifted in midair. He was in the grip of one possessed of marvelous strength, and with my eyes seeming to burst from their sockets and without power to ejaculate a word, I was compelled to see the terrible tragedy out.

"It seemed that the glittering blade remained uplifted for an age, but with lightninglike swiftness it descended and was buried in his bosom. Would to Heaven this were all. Ere the steel did its work, one word leaped from Trajan Marshall's throat, and merciful God, Roland, it was my own name!"

Theophilus Brawn saw truly in his trance," I exclaimed.

"What do you mean, Roland?" exclaimed Claudia. "What did the man with the white mice tell you?"

"Not now, dear," I answered, soothingly. "Proceed to the end of your story."

"There is not much more left to tell. I was horrified. That one could enact such a terrible drama in her sleep mystified and almost paralyzed me. It was an unconscious crime. I knew that the girl would retire and later on waken without the slightest recollection of her guilt She was a murderess, yet irresponsible. The law might condemn her, and wholly upon my own testimony, when, but for her trance, she would not have reddened her hands with blood. You may realize the awful secret with which I had become burdened.

"Having accomplished her work, Mossy coolly secreted the instrument and left the room by the door through which she had entered. The light was alone with the dead. I silently withdrew, with the knowledge of one of the strangest crimes for my secret. You remember that Mossy testified at the inquest that she had seen a light in the marsh road, and that was, of course, before she set out upon her singular mission. She must have seen me below the house. When I learned that you had returned to Marshedge I burned to see you, but still I could not bring myself to that point, for I feared that you might worm from me the scenes of that tragic night. You nearly got my secret the night we met in front of the hunting lodge. I was on the edge of disclosing it then. Yes, Roland, Mossy Phipps is the person who killed your Uncle Trajan, but you know how she did it."

For several moments I looked at Claudia, who buried her white face in her hands and remained immovable in the chair.

"What shall we do?" I asked.

"Let the girl go with her stained soul," came the low reply. "She knows nothing of the deadly blow."

"But she came back!" I exclaimed. "She returned in her sleep, and took the dagger from the cabinet where she must have secreted it, some time after the crime, for I witnessed the theft of it, and followed her to the lodge, where I recovered it, to have it taken from my room by Brutus Bobbs for evidence against me. I have it again."

"How came it into your hands?"

"I unearthed it at the foot of the falls where Jenkins saw Mossy bury it during one of her trances."

"Wonderful!"

"Mossy must go!" I said, in tones of determination "The girl must vacate Marshedge and go out into the world, unless——"

I paused and received a direct query which shot from Claudia's eyes.

There is the second crime," I proceeded. "You must not forget that the man with the white mice was found dead at the cataract."

"Whose hand did that?"

"Theophilus Brawn was killed by a revolver shot. He was the spy whom I sent to Marshedge from my cell, for the purpose of getting on with Mossy, in order to solve the red tangle which has enveloped this place. How well he served me I cannot tell. His life went out at the waterfall. Mossy thinks Jason Sellers is going to make her his wife, but that he will never do."

"He is too proud for that."

"The mystery of the footprints at the cataract must be solved. Your shoe fits the tracks to a nicety. I have no doubt, Claudia dear, that your shoe made those tracks."

"Roland!"

"You are as innocent of that crime as the unborn babe," I hastened to say.

"Before God I am, Roland!"

"But your shoe?"

"Who wore it that night?"

"The person who murdered Theophilus Brawn!" cried I.

The next instant a slight noise fell upon our ears. Claudia started to her feet, with one finger at her lip for silence, and we looked into each other's eyes as though a ghost was about to turn the doorknob. Amid the profound stillness of the moment the door slowly slipped ajar, and as we started back the figure of Mossy Phipps advanced into the room. Her brilliant eyes were wide open, her hands had fallen to her side, and her head was proudly erect.

Instantly we hugged the farthest wall and stared at her as if she was one who had come back from the dead. Slowly and with a sort of ghostliness she glided across the yielding carpet until she reached the cabinet in the wall, into which she thrust a long thin hand.

If Mossy sought a particular object she was doomed to disappointment, for she suddenly withdrew her hand and turned toward the hallway. As she opened the door and stepped into the darkened area, I clutched Claudia's wrist and leaned toward her.

"Come!" I whispered. "We will see the end of this adventure. It may be the last one we will ever have with Mossy."

On tiptoe we threw ourselves upon the sleep-walker's trail and saw her open the front door and step out into the night. Her white garment was our guide, and presently she turned marshward and set her face toward the sea, whilst the old house loomed gloomily against the moon which hung pallid in the sky.

CHAPTER XX.

THE END OF IT ALL.

"She is going toward the sea!" suddenly whispered Claudia, as her hand fastened on my arm, and sure enough Mossy had left the marsh path and had set her face toward the waters that churned among the rocks at the fringe of the restless deep.

It was almost impossible to believe that the girl was under the influence of the strange trance which had upon many former occasions held full possession of her. She walked erect, avoiding every obstruction, and we followed silently and with bated breath, anxious, yet fearing to witness the outcome. At last, to our mingled horror, we saw her pause with the sea before her, and her foot almost at the very fringe of the rippling waters.

"She has awakened," said Claudia.

As we skulked behind some adjacent shrubbery we saw that the spell had left Mossy and that she was wide awake. She cast a frightened look around, but her keenly roving eyes did not discover us.

All at once the maid stepped forward, as if goaded by some impetuous impulse, and to our breathless horror we saw her throw up her hands and then plunge into the water! I uttered a horrified cry as I sprang forward, but the waves had already carried the sleep-walker out of reach, and when I dashed on, calling to her that help was at hand, she turned to me a white face seamed with agony, and the next instant the breakers combed her into their arms. She was gone!

For some time Claudia and I stood on the moonlit beach and gazed speechless at the bleak scene that confronted us. Nothing came to us from the bosom of the deep—no cry, no sigh of the life which had just gone out, and the waters did not give up their prey.

"There was a cause for that wild act," said I, as we turned away.

"Time will tell," was Claudia's answer, and slowly we retraced our steps and re-entered the house.

Five minutes later we entered Mossy's room, and paused when our eyes fell upon a small packet on the little center table. As Claudia picked it up a cry rang from her throat, and she turned toward me holding out the packet.

"It is addressed to me," I heard her say, and then she laid it down as she caught her breath.

"Open it, dear," I said.

"I have not the strength," was the low reply, and the little object was pushed forward.

Without a word I cut the cord that bound it, and some papers dropped upon the red cloth.

"It is a confession," said I, looking into Claudia's face. "Here ends one or more mysteries of this house."

"Read it alone first," answered my love, "and if I am to know it, tell me tomorrow."

With this Claudia withdrew, and I was left alone with the papers in my hands. The night deepened, and the sound of the sea which had engulfed the somnambulist was the only noise that saluted my ear, and it seemed a requiem for the dead.

It was not a long bit of writing. Traced in Mossy's poor handwriting, with indifferent grammar, it was a story of deception, of ambition and failure. When I had reached the last word, I folded the sheets and placed them in my pocket. The next morning Claudia met me at the foot of the stair. Her look was a question.

"Don't tell me," she said, holding up her hand. "Let me think well of Mossy."

I did not tell her, though I now knew who killed the man with the white mice. I knew that, suspecting his errand, Mossy had followed him to the waterfall and taken his life. I knew that the will which Claudia had found in the cabinet was a forged one, forged by Jason Sellers; that he must have made way with the true will; that he had lorded it over my Uncle Trajan for the basest purposes; that he had but lately cast aside the girl who had hoped to become his wife, and that John Groves had aided him in his plots.

More than this, I now knew that the object which Jason Sellers's man had handed to Mossy at the bridge, when Jenkins and I watched, was the dagger which had killed my uncle, and which, as we have seen, had been stolen from Brutus Bobbs. All this I knew and yet more. The last confession told me that, having the keys to all the rooms of the house, Mossy had opened Claudia's door and taken her shoes, which she had worn on the night when she took the life of Theophilus Brawn. But for the sleeping trance which had overtaken Mossy after penning her startling confession, we might have had living proof of her story, but the waves would guard her silence which was death.

I did not tell Claudia. From that day to this she has not asked me what was in the packet which Mossy Phipps had left behind.

She only knows that one day I went to Jason Sellers, and coming back, laid the true will in her lap, the will which gave her Marshedge without reservation, and then I told her that the doer of all the wrong had concluded to take a Continental trip, which he did, dying across the sea, with all his sins upon him. As for John Groves, he departed between two days and was lost sight of forever.

It was days after the last sleep-walk that something was given up by the sea. It was pitiful to look upon, yet it was human, and we reverently and with forgiveness laid it away in the little burial ground on the cedared hill, and Claudia planted flowers on the spot.

Thus it was that sunshine came to Claudia and me, and gradually the house on the marsh, with its last mystery cleared, became the abode of happiness, and the little ones who played on the seashore and laughed at the breakers heard not the story of the past, for we would not poison their merriment with the story I have tried to tell.

The End.

Boxcar Bert—"I didn't think you'd ride on dis bum road, Sid."

Semaphore Sid—"I wouldn't, Bert, only de president was an old boyhood friend of mine."

Safety.

During his first curacy, a clergyman found the ladies of the parish entirely too helpful. Such a storm of petty squabbles arose from their over-eagerness to help that in despair he gave up the place. Not long afterward he met his successor.

"How are you getting on with the ladies?" asked the escaped curate.

"Oh, very well," was the answer. "There's safety in numbers."

"I found it in Exodus," was the quick reply.

THE LADDER.

If you've climbed up to the middle
Or beyond it and below
There are many, many climbers
Who have all the way to go;
Ah, turn not from them, scorning,
But in gentleness look down—
You can help them win the summit,
You can help them reach the crown!

It's a weary sort of climbing,
Rung by rung throughout the years;
With the fingers sometimes slipping,
And the spirit full of tears;
Then behold the weaker strugglers
Who have all the way to go,
And lean a bit to help them
As they watch you from below!

It will not hurt your effort
If in helping them you slip,
For if you aid another,
When you make the second trip,
You will find the struggle lessened,
And each rung unto your feet
Will echo with a music sweet!
That will make the work seem sweet!

AS GOOD AS NEW.

Grabley had bought a French touring automobile for $14. Grabley thought it was the bargain of the century, but he hated to talk about it because he intended to sell the machine and he wanted more than $14 for it.

"It's a great story," said the president of the company, "if you can only get Grabley to tell it."

"But why won't he tell it?" we asked.

"He doesn't know it's a great story," said the president. "Grabley is English. You'll have to put him through the third degree and pull his fingernails out with pincers, but if you keep at him you may get the story."

He sent for Grabley and while we were waiting he explained that Grabley was the manager of the credit department of the company, and that he had bought a French touring automobile, 1909 model, for $14.

Grabley came in and the court went into session. There were a few general remarks made concerning the weather and somebody thought the Sox would have a walkaway next year. Speaking of baseball reminded somebody else of Ed Walsh's automobile that had been given him as a reward for his heroic services in the championship battles between the Sox and the Cubs, and speaking of automobiles reminded the president that Grabley had a story about an automobile. No, Mr. Grabley had no story about an automobile. None whatever.

"But you own an automobile, don't you, Grabley?" asked the president with an insinuating smile.

Yes, Grabley owned an automobile, but then there were lots of people owned automobiles. Such enough, but then Grabley had got his machine cheap, had he not. Mr. Grabley said "Well, rather," and remarked that he had been unable to get out to many ball games during the season, but that baseball was a jolly sport, although not so good as cricket.

"I don't understand how you were able to get a French touring car for $14," spoke up the leading member of the inquisition. "What store did you buy it at?"

"Oh, it wasn't at a store," said Grabley, "it was at an auction, and then, you know, I paid more than $14. I had to pay $60."

"Why, I thought you only paid $14," said the president.

"Not at all," said Grabley. "That is the price it was arranged I was to pay, d'ye see, but Slosher didn't understand and he ran the bid up to sixty before he found out he was bidding against me. Silly bounder, that Slosher."

"Who is Slosher?" asked the inquisition.

"Oh, he's one of my men in the credit department," said Grabley. "Well, I must be going along. Glad to have met you chaps. Really, there's nothing to say about the automobile. Only it was a great bargain."

"But didn't the people who owned the automobile bid against you?" asked the inquisition.

"Oh, no," said Grabley. "They had gone away—quite hurriedly."

"Why did they go?" asked the inquisition.

"Well, you see," said Mr. Grabley, "these chaps were running some sort of a chauffeur correspondence school. That is, they taught you how to run an automobile by correspondence. They got us to get out a lot of lithographs and then didn't pay us. They didn't pay anybody, and some of their creditors went after them and there was an auction of their automobile. They had an automobile, I bought it. It was a great bargain; it was good as new."

"But," said the inquisition, "how did Slosher come to bid against you?"

"Well, we arranged to buy in the automobile and I thought I might not be there in time. So I told Slosher to be sure and be there and not let anybody else get the machine."

"But you were there, weren't you?" demanded the president. "Didn't you see Slosher and didn't Slosher see you?"

"Why, yes," said Grabley, "but there was a big crowd, don't you see?"

"Anyhow, you bought a $9,000 French automobile for $60, didn't you?" demanded the president.

"Yes," said Mr. Grabley, "it was a wonderful bargain."

"And I saw you driving down Michigan avenue in the machine the following Sunday," said the president.

"I am sure you are mistaken," said Mr. Grabley. "I did not drive out in the machine the following Sunday."

"Why not?" demanded the inquisition.

"Because," said Mr. Grabley, "when I came to look it over there were no tires on the automobile. I bought new ones and it took a week or two to have them put on."

"What did the tires cost you?" demanded the inquisition.

"Oh, $300," said Grabley.

"Well, then you drove out in your new touring car?"

"Why, no," said Mr. Grabley, "there were some minor repairs and things that were needed."

"For instance?" demanded the president.

"Well, you see," said Mr. Grabley, "the rotters who had owned the automobile had taken away the magneto. I got a new one. I recall that fact very clearly."

"Why do you recall it so clearly?" asked the president.

"The magneto cost me $75," said Mr. Grabley, with a sigh.

"And then you drove out," said the president. "I saw you on the Lake Shore drive going a mile a minute."

"Oh, no, indeed," said Mr. Grabley. "The engines had been taken out. One must have engines in an automobile."

"Quite so," said the president. "What did you do?"

"Naturally, I bought new engines," said Mr. Grabley.

"Naturally," said the president, "and then you went out for a ride."

"No," said Mr. Grabley, "you see, the machine had a what do you call, a chain drive, I believe."

"Yes," said the president.

"And there were no chains."

"I see."

"And so I bought chains."

"Exactly. And then you went whirling down the avenue. I saw one of your guests standing up on the cushions."

"Oh, no," said Mr. Grabley. "They had taken out the cushions as well as the running board and the gasoline tank, and horn, and the radiators, and the canopy top, and the tool box, and the electric side and tail lights."

"I see," said the president. "Outside of that it was a regular automobile, wasn't it?"

"Oh, perfectly," said Mr. Grabley. "As good as new."

"And you had those parts supplied?" asked the president.

"Yes, indeed."

"Anything else?"

"No, nothing," said Mr. Grabley, "except a windshield and a speedometer, and a clock, and the reflectors, and chain guards, and the connecting rods, and the rocker pins."

"But there was nothing else missing, was there?" asked the president.

"Oh, nothing," asserted Mr. Grabley. "That is nothing to speak of."

"I suppose you are out riding now every day in your car?" remarked the inquisition.

"Well, not exactly," said Mr. Grabley. "You see, the carburetor was out of the car. It took some time to get one; we had to send to France."

"Yes," said the president.

"And the emergency brake was missing," continued Mr. Grabley, "and the fan."

"But nothing else?" said the president.

"Oh, no," said Mr. Grabley, "nothing but the clutch and the cylinders."

"And the cam shaft?" said the president.

"Yes," said Mr. Grabley, "the cam shaft."

"But except the trifles you have mentioned," said the inquisition, "the machine was in first-class condition?"

"Oh, absolutely," said Mr. Grabley.

"And a great bargain?" said the inquisition.

"Wonderful," said Mr Grabley, "and as good as new."

Lucille—"Never mind, Harold, some time we'll have everything we want."
Harold—"Your father said the next time he saw me around here I'd get mine."

How He Got the Title.

Speaker Champ Clark has revived the old custom of conferring titles on all members of Congress. Every man he summons to the chair to preside over the committee of the whole is designated as the "gentleman from Kentucky, Colonel Blank."

The practice has been adopted by the employes at the House end of the Capitol, and there is no member of the House or attache thereof so insignificant as to escape a title.

Representative Doughton of North Carolina thought the limit had been reached, however, when he heard a dusky brushboy calling Representative James William Collier of Vicksburg, Miss., "Major." Mr. Collier was born in 1872

"What are you major of?" asked Mr. Doughton. "Major of militia or what? Where did you get a military title, anyhow?"

"Fighting," answered Mr. Collier.

"Fighting what?" demanded Mr. Doughton.

"Fighting to get to Congress," answered Collier. "I expected to be brevetted for fighting to stay here."

One Way to Look at It.

A candidate for public office, who was visiting his friends over on the other side of the ridge, stopped to spend the night with Uncle Jimmie Lowry.

After supper they sat in front of the big log fire, and settled the country's problems, to the great satisfaction of the old man.

"Well, Uncle Jimmie," at last ventured the visitor, "what do you think of this Woman's Suffrage business?"

"I'm agin it, Hen. Yes, sir, I'm agin it," he answered promptly, with an emphatic shake of the head. "I've took notice they's a powerful sight o' meaniess goes on at elections—cussin' an' fightin' an' sich. It'll be wuss'n ever if the wimmen gits mixed up in it."

"But, Uncle Jimmie," urged Henry, "maybe the women will elevate the ballot box."

The old man turned squarely toward the other, and his voice was very serious as he replied:

"Look a-here, Hen, hain't you never lurned yet that they is jest two things men will fight bver quicker'n enney others? Yessir, an' them two things is dawgs an' wimmen."

Care of the Eyes.

The person who wishes to keep his eyesight good until late in life should allow nothing irritating to get into them. If, in traveling, dust or cinders get in, they should be carefully removed as soon as possible afterward by the application of water along the edge of the closed lids, and by immersing the eyes completely. This process should be continued for several days. In reality, every one would do well to apply pure water to the edge of the closed lids several times every day by means of a soft cloth, and immerse them completely once or twice. The eyes should never be squeezed, pressed, or roughly treated. The practice followed by some of pressing the corner between the thumb and forefinger to prevent the flatting t' at comes with advanced age, is of doubtful benefit. Any one who observes these simple rules in regard to straining the eyes, who keeps them constantly free from foreign substances with pure water, may, if he has no hereditary weakness, defy time for many years, and avert paying heavy bills to the oculist.

Preparing for Wedding.

There was to be a wedding in eastern Kentucky. Many of the mountaineers would be there. Early in the morning of the nuptial day. Bud Hightower was noticed filling an old No. 12 shoe with slugs and nails and plaster of paris.

"Wot you doin', Bud?" drawled Sim Beesley.

"Kain't you see wot I'm doin'? I'm makin' moonshine sperrits out'n cheese scrapin's."

Sim chuckled.

"Gettin' good an' ready f'r th' weddin', I reckon."

"I reckon."

"Goin' to throw it at th' bridegroom, maybe?"

"Goin' to throw it at him, maybe, but it ain't goin' to hit him. It's goin' to break the face of Snipe Tolliver, an' do it accidental, too. I been layin' f'r that ther' Snipe f'r a right smart spell."

And he drove an extra railway spike in the hardening mass.

Flattered.

Two men, highly intoxicated, were walking home from their club, arm in arm, one night, when both tumbled simultaneously over some obstruction on the sidewalk. One rolled to the right and landed in a gutter, while the other fell to the left and slid into a little trench that some workmen had been digging and left unprotected. For some moments after the fall dead silence reigned, and then the one on the left cried:

"I say, old chap, can't you give me a bit of a lift?"

And the man on the right called back: "Oh, you flatterer!"

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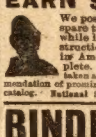

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Height of Laziness.

He was a poor, miserable-looking dog, and the stranger's heart was filled with pity. For the dog was howling, and it was only too evident that he was suffering pain.

So he asked the tired rustic who lounged near, why the dog howled.

"'Im?" asked the rustic. "He's just lazy—that's all."

"But laziness doesn't make a dog howl, surely?" queried the benevolent one.

"Does 'im," said the tired owner. "Oh'y, lazy."

"But how?" queried the persistent questioner. "How can laziness make him howl?"

"Well, you see," said the rural lounger, "that pore dog is sittin' on some real tough thistles and he's too lazy to get off, so he just sits there and howls, 'cause it hurts. See?"

When It Popped.

Mr. Hilton—Have you opened that bottle of champagne, Bridget?

Bridget—Faith, I started to open it an' it began to open itself. Sure, the mon that filled that bottle must 'av' put in two quarts instead of wan.

A Thoughtful Fiance.

"My love, I don't want you to do your own work when you are married."

"That's considerate of you."

"And that brings me to a delicate question. Have you enough money to enable us to keep a hired girl?"

Easy Enough.

Marks—So you think Miss Bloom is both pretty and intellectual? Huh! You can't make any one believe that.

Parks—Can't I? I made her believe it.

His Mother—You need not complain to me, Mozart. I told the nurse to punish you when you were naughty.

Little Mozart—It isn't that, mother; but she scolded me in G sharp when my thoughts were tuned in A, and then spanked me in syncopated time, which I cannot endure.

Domestic Service Improvements.

Mistress—"Now that you have finished the course at the cooking school, I presume you are ready to go to work?"

Latter-day Domestic—"I don't know, mum. The teacher said if you was goin' to use a gasoline stove I'd better take a course o' scientific lectures at the Harvard Annex."

Nearly Always on Time.

"I hear you have taken your son out of college and put him in the office."

"Yes."

"Is he attending to business pretty regularly?"

"Fairly so. Only once or twice has he failed to get to the office in time to go to the matinee."

The Press Agent—"Kid Talkaway is training in road work to improve his wind."

The Referee—"What's that for? You know the nearest he'll ever come to a fight is to challenge and then blow about it."

The Press Agent—"He has to have wind for that."

Like T. R.

Teacher—Johnny, would you like to be President of the United States some day?

Johnny—No, ma'am. I'd rather have a steady job.

Against Her Principles.

Among the questions given by a county superintendent was the following example in arithmetic: "If a horse can run a mile in one minute and fifty seconds and another a mile in two minutes, how far would the first horse be ahead in a race of two miles?"

A very prim teacher returned the question with this attached: "I will have nothing to do with horse racing."

Not Essential.

"I don't quite grasp the idea in this poem of yours."

"Don't try," advised the author. "A man doesn't always have an idea every time he writes a poem."

Lucille—"Prof. Dike is a fine dancing master."

Wallie—"Think he can teach me steps?"

Lucille—"Certainly. Why, in his younger days he's trained elephants for a circus."

The Rejected One—And is this great love of mine to be cast aside?

She (wearily)—You might have it stuffed.

A Guest's Mistake.

A gentleman staying at a hotel asked the person next to him if he would please pass the mustard.

"Sir," said the other, "do you mistake me for a waiter?"

"Oh, no sir," was the immediate reply, "I only mistook you for a gentleman."

A Correction.

"We are drifting toward a paternal form of Government," said the economist.

"Pardon me if I correct you," responded the suffragette, gently; "to be accurate, you should say a maternal form of government."

His Fall.

"Came to last night and fell against the piano."

"Hurt yourself?"

"No; I struck the soft pedal."

Explained.

"Why doesn't your auto run faster?"

"Well, you see the rubber tires."

When the Women Vote.

"Things will be changed when the women vote."

"Yes, I suppose they will. Probably, they will insist on having rugs on the floors of all the polling places."

"I wasn't thinking of that. They will probably want to add postscripts to their ballots after they get them marked."

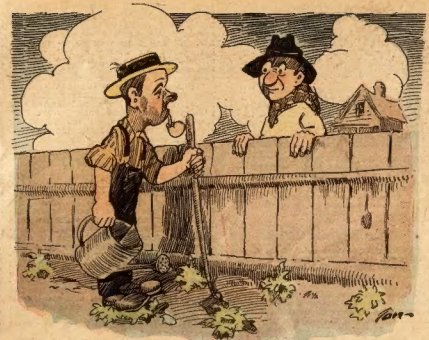
It Was Ripe.

The Short-Sighted Lady—I don't care for your bananas this morning, Mr. Jesse. That seems to be the only ripe one.

Mr. Jesse—That ain't a banana, mum; that's my thumb!

Weggie—"Don't you think my chum, a man of large caliber, Miss Wose?"

Miss Cutting—"Yes. Big bore!"



Outways—How's gardening at your place?

Patchlott—Fine; failing 4,000,000 potato bugs to the acre.

Friendly Advice.

"But for my ears being in the way, I could wear one of those very high collars."

"Too bad; but stick to your ears, girl. They may be unfashionable now, but you may need 'em in your old age to hook your spectacles over."

Both Are Right.

The Optimist—After all, marriage is the thing. If you marry the right woman there is nothing like it.

The Pessimist—And if you marry the wrong woman there is nothing like it.

Definition.

A musical dictionary defines a shout to be an "unpleasant noise produced by overstraining the throat, for which great singers are paid well and small children are punished."

"I stitched up the hole in your pocket after you had gone to sleep last night." "Hm! How did you know there was a hole in my pocket?"

Dull-Eyed Scientists.

Mrs. Hayseed—"Who are those gentlemen runnin' into our barn to get out o' th' rain?"

Daughter—"They are a party of scientists who are staying at the hotel. They've been out on some expedition or other."

Mrs. Hayseed—"I don't see where their eyes was las' night. Any one might 'a' known from th' new moon it was goin' to rain. It was tipped up so it couldn't hold water if it tried."

Another Problem Solved.

Mr. Suburb—"My dear, don't you think that instead of building a $10,000 house, and putting in $600 worth of furniture, it would be better to build two $5,000 houses and put $300 worth of furniture in each?"

Mrs. Suburb—"Oh all things! What for?"

Mr. Suburb—"So we'll always have one house to live in while the other is being cleaned."

Really Didn't Matter.

"Are you not afraid that some of your children will fall into that open cistern?" asked the nervous boarder, looking over the picket fence in the back yard.

"Oh, no, mum," came the complacent reply. "Anyhow, it ain't where we gets our drinkin' water."

Generous.

Weary Willie—That old Tightwad would never give you a nickel!

Tomato Can Joe—Yes, he would.

Weary Willie—For what?

Tomato Can Joe—For a dime.—Judge.

Playing Safe.

Waiter—How many eggs did you order, sir?

Diner—Twenty; among the lot I may strike one good one.

Money Makers.

"Gracious!" exclaimed the kind old lady to the beggar, "are they the best shoes you've got?"

"Why, lady," replied the candid beggar, "could yer imagine better ones fur diz bizness? Every one o' dem holes means nickels an' dimes ter me."

Druggist—I had to let Charley go. He was too much of a fan.

Customer—How is that?

Druggist—He used to make pills the size of baseballs.

The Suitor Backs Out.

Father (to his daughter's suitor)—"I have sad news for you. I am ruined! I have lost everything!"

Suitor—"Console yourself, dear sir, with the thought that you are now in no danger of losing your daughter."

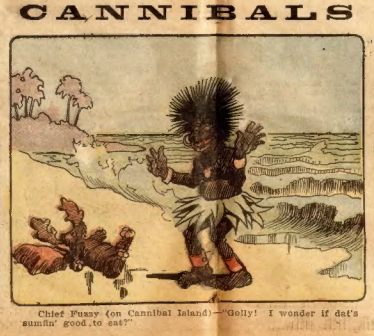
How Jones Makes Money.

Townley—"Jones says that he's making five thousand dollars a year out of the chicken business."

Subbubs—"I'll bet it is out of it. He's not making that in the chicken business."

THE CANNIBALS WILT.

Willie (on deck)—"Oh, Papa, I've lost my Bull-Moose-Teddy-Bear overboard!"



Chief Fuzzy (on Cannibal Island)—"Golly! I wonder if dat's sumfin' good to eat?"

"Wow! It speaks! It's a spirit, a Wonder-god!"

Cannibals (in chorus)—"De not destroy us, O Wonder-god! Accept our worship and keep evil from us!"

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Each closet has its skeleton,
We know, beyond a doubt;
They often in the stilly night
Emerge and walk about.
It is one thing or another,
Their names we never name,
All strive to keep them hidden—
All have 'em just the same!

It may be John, who went to jail
For stealing of a sheep;
Or Jane, who wed a bogus duke
Because she got him cheap;
Or father's awful language—
His chance to learn was slim,
But he made a lot of money
And we let that talk for him.

It may be just a skeleton,
No worse than yours or mine,
Which any one is free to see—
They're not hid by design.
We never talk about them,
It would not be polite;
They are not really dangerous,
But each is such a fright!

* * *

The Right Retort.

"Nothing is so unbecoming in a married man as to boast of his success among the ladies. Such boasting is intolerable enough in bachelors and widowers, but in married men——"

The speaker was Mrs. May Hutton, a delegate to Baltimore from Spokane. She made a gesture of disgust and continued:

"At a dinner a married man praised the beauty of the Atlantic City girls. Then, with a foolish chuckle, he added:

"'I had an awful bunch of them after me when I was down there on my vacation.'

"The lady beside him looked at him coolly and retorted:

"'Dear me! they must have been an awful bunch!'"

* * *

Proprietor—"Young man, do you know who I am?"

Boy—"Hey, fellers! Hurry up! Here is a guy what don't know who he is?"

* * *

Cantankerous Jake.

"Uncle Jake," was one of the characters of Bunbury. He was as deaf as a post—when he wanted to be—and contrary as a bundle of sticks.

One of his neighbors came into his yard one day and said, "Uncle Jake, I'd like to borrow your wagon this morning; mine is having a spring mended."

"You'll have to speak louder," rejoined Uncle Jake. "I don't hear very well, and I don't like to lend my wagon, anyhow!"

The old man was an expert maker of ax-helves—an occupation in which there is more art than the uninstructed would suppose—and these handles he left at the village store to be sold on commission.

One snowy day as Uncle Jake came stamping up the steps of the store, another old fellow who was known as Uncle Horace remarked to the men lounging about the stove:

"I'll treat the crowd if I don't make Uncle Jake agree to the first thing I say to him when he comes in."

"Don't be rash, Uncle Horace!" called out the storekeeper. "That never happened yet, and it isn't likely to."

But Uncle Horace merely grinned and picked up one of Uncle Jake's ax-helves. The door opened and in came Uncle Jake.

"Jake," said Uncle Horace, running his fingers up and down the smooth wood, "this is a mighty good ax handle."

"No, it ain't," replied Uncle Jake at once. "I can make good handles, but that one you've got is the kind people want. They don't know no better!"

And Uncle Horace treated the company to sardines, crackers and cheese.

* * *

A Critic at a Wedding.

In the absence of the regular society reporter the dramatic critic of the Daily Doings was detailed to cover a wedding. "I'll do the best I can," he said, "but I feel sure I shall make a mess of it."

This is what he turned in—omitting the preliminary remarks about the size of the house and the delay in beginning the performance:

"Mr. Barker, in the role of the bridegroom, acted the part in a stiff yet listless manner. He has a good stage presence, but mars the effect by a total lack of animation and an almost inaudible voice. Miss Perkins, as the bride, was much more effective. Her costume was bewildering, yet true to life. If one may venture to criticise, her effort to overcome her obvious stage fright was a trifle too evident. She was in good voice, however, and her enunciation was clear and distinct.

"It must be pointed out that both Miss Perkins and Mr. Barker were deficient in their lines and had to be prompted almost constantly by the Rev. Henry Harper, who, as the officiating clergyman, was decidedly the star of the performance."

* * *

A Real Sport.

One stormy day recently in Washington, Senator Jeff Davis, of Arkansas, the redoubtable champion of the plain people, had occasion to go from the Capitol to the White House. Once before, when required to make such a trip, he had ventured to ride in a taxicab, and the fare was a small item compared with the telegraph tolls that the Senator paid in explaining his sybaritic extravagance to the folks at home. This time, accordingly, he intended to take no such chances. Emerging from the Senate office building, he cast an eye about for a horse-drawn vehicle. The only one in sight was soon at the Senator's disposal. The carriage was dilapidated, and the horse long since past its prime.

"But," remarked Mr. Davis dubiously to the eager jehu, "your horse doesn't look very—er—strong. Aren't you afraid he'll drop dead before we get to the White House?"

"Drap dead!" exploded the indignant negro. "No, sah; dis yere hoss won't drap daid. He may look pore, but Ah knows he's a good hoss, kase, Ah's druv him every day for fifteen years."

"And you'll take me up there for twenty-five cents?" pursued the Senator, resignedly.

"Fifty cents, hoss."

"Twenty-five," insisted the Senator.

"All right," assented the negro, "Ah's spoht enough to spend a quotah jes' to shew you-all what dis hoss kin do."

* * *

A London Dialogue.

Liz—"Wot makes 'em go up in the air, them things?"

Alf—"Why, the blinkin' hinjin, yer silly kid."

Liz—"Well, ain't motors got hinjins?"

Alf—"Co'rse they 'as, but they ain't got no wings, 'ave 'em?"

Liz—"Then it's the wings as makes 'em go up, ain't it?"

Alf—"Pawtly. Well, it's like this. They runs along the grahnd a bit an' then the wind gits under the wings, and hup they go! See?"

Liz—"Wunnerful, ain't it?"

Alf—"Yest abaht."

Liz—"An' 'ow do they come dahn, then, Alf?"

Alf—"Why, stop the hinjin, o' corse."

Liz—"But 'ow can they git the wind aht from under the wings?"

Alf—"Well—finstances—well, 'ow does a bird do it?"

Liz—"I dunno."

Alf—"You seen a bird, I s'pose, ain't yer?"

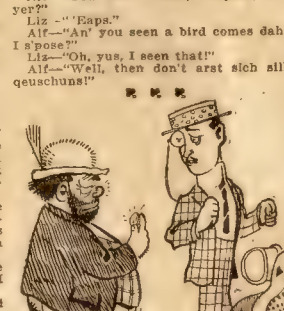
Liz—"Eaps."

Alf—"An' you seen a bird comes dahn, I s'pose?"

Liz—"Oh, yus, I seen that!"

Alf—"Well, then don't arst sich silly qeuschuns!"

* * *



Joey Bo—"Ain't you got a paper dollar instead of dis silver one?"

Philanthropist—"What's the matter with the silver one?"

Joey Bo—"It's too heavy t' carry around dis hot wedder."

* * *

Food for the Suffragists.

President Taft's octogenarian aunt, Miss Delia Torrey, of Watertown, Conn., who refreshes Washington society during an occasional visit to the White House, is just the sort of a dear, old-fashioned lady that we all like to think our grandmothers were. She is quaint, unaffected, witty, plain-spoken, and has no time for what she calls the "foolish folderols" of the new woman.

In this respect, she had an amusing passage at arms recently with Dr. Harvey Wiley, the famous pure food expert, who, since his marriage to a charming suffragette, has become an ardent champion of woman's rights. The genial doctor had expended much eloquence in trying to convert "Aunt Delia" to the "cause," when she dismissed all of his arguments in favor of votes for women with one terse, smiling sentence.

"Shucks, Doctor," she said; "if there is one thing a man can do without the help of a woman, for goodness' sake let him do it in peace."

* * *

Mr. Kicks—"Wonder why Dr. Dit wears his hat so much on the back of his head?"

Mrs. Kicks—"Because there's no front to wear it on, I suppose."

* * *

Brain Work and Worry.

Brain work is conducive to health and longevity, while brain worry causes disease and shortens life. The truth of this statement, and its application to what we see around us, are evident enough; yet it is well that such subjects should be continually discussed. Intellectual labor, although severe, like that performed by our judges of our highest courts, or by scholars and persons devoted to literary pursuits, if unmixed with excitement and followed with regularity, is seen to promote bodily health and long life. On the other hand, mental cares, attended with suppressed emotions, and occupations which from their nature are subject to great vicissitudes of fortune and constant anxiety, break down the lives of the strongest.

* * *

The Very Least.

An admiring constituent gave Congressman Legare of South Carolina one of those vest-pocket edition Lilliputian Mexican dogs to take home to the children. Legare—pronounced Leg-ree, by the way—was leading the dog along by a cotton string, when a South Carolina mountaineer stopped him.

"Are it a reg'lar dog?" the man asked.

"Yes, it's a Chi——. Well, I can't pronounce the name of it," said Legare, "but it's some kind of Mexican dog."

"Just a pup, I reckon."

"No, it's full grown."

"Well, opined the mountaineer, "that's the least dog I ever seen at one time."

THIRTEEN YEARS

Unlucky Number for Dakota Woman.

The question whether the number "13" is really more unlucky than any other number has never been entirely settled.

A So. Dak. woman, after thirteen years of misery from drinking coffee, found a way to break the "unlucky spell." Tea is just as injurious as coffee because it contains *caffeine*, the drug in coffee. She writes:

"For thirteen years I have been a nervous wreck from drinking coffee. My liver, stomach, heart—in fact, my whole system being actually poisoned by it.

"Last year I was confined to my bed for six months. Finally it dawned on me that coffee caused the trouble. Then I began using Postum instead of coffee, but with little faith, as my mind was in such a condition that I hardly knew what to do next.

"Extreme nervousness and failing eyesight caused me to lose all courage. In about two weeks after I quit coffee and began to use Postum, I was able to read and my head felt clear. I am improving all the time and I will be a strong, well woman yet.

"I have fooled more than one person with a delicious cup of Postum. Mrs. S. wanted to know where I bought my fine coffee. I told her my grocer had it and when she found out it was Postum she has used it ever since, and her nerves are building up fine.

"My brain is strong, my nerves steady, my appetite good, and best of all, I enjoy such sound, pleasant sleep." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Get the little book in pkg., "The Road to Wellville." "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

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Let Us Start You In Business

Be your own boss. No need to trudge along on a salary. We'll start you in a business of your own—give you a chance to make big money easy. No money needed—no experience necessary. Write now!

Write Today Get full particulars of this exceptional offer right away. Just send post card or letter and we will tell you all about it. We send you all accessories—complete outfit free—for starting right in to make big money.

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ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

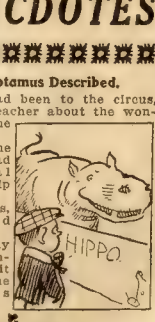
The Hippopotamus Described.

Johnny, who had been to the circus, was telling his teacher about the wonderful things he had seen.

"An' teacher," he cried, "they had one big animal they called the hip—hip—hip——"

"Hippopotamus, dear," prompted the teacher.

"I can't just say its name," exclaimed Johnny, "but it looks just like nine thousand pounds of liver."



Sophisticated.

A young man and a maiden were betrothed.

"Dearest one," said the young man, "I love thee. So great is my devotion that if another should but cast loving glances at thee a fearsome thing would happen."

"What might it be?" quoth the maiden.

"Even that I would kill him. Dost believe me now?"

"Nay," quoth the maiden.

"Now, what meanest thou? Why believest thou not that I would kill the dastard villain?"

"Because," quoth the maiden, "thou wouldst not know aught about it."

The Power of a Word.

A single word was often sufficient for Talleyrand to make his keenest retort. When a hpochandriac, who had notoriously led a profligate life, complained to the diplomatist that he was enduring the tortures of hell, Talleyrand simply answered, "Already?"

To a woman who had lost her husband Talleyrand once addressed a letter of condolence in two words:

"Oh, madam!"

In less than a year the woman had married again, and then his letter of congratulations was:

"Ah, madam!"

An Observing Woman.

Miss De Pretty (on railway train)—"There! You said men were never polite to homely women. Did you notice that handsome gentleman lower the sash for that fearfully ugly creature in front of him?"

Experienced Aunt (quietly)—"The train is going west, and it is late in the afternoon."

"What has that to do with it?"

"The sun was shining through her window into his eyes."

Willing to Work.

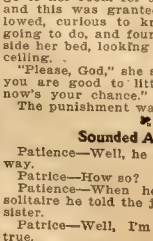
Mr. Bullion—"Huh! Want to marry my daughter, eh? What do you expect to do for a living. Tell me that?"

Mr. Poorchap—"Well—er—I was thinking you might—er—need a confidential assistant to help clip coupons."

What's the Use.

George Ade, Oliver Herford and several others were once swapping stories, having for their basis the inability of the Briton to understand an American joke. The party laughed heartily at several of the tales, when a "bromide" who chanced to be present offered this perfectly obvious remark:

"Well, you can always tell an Englishman."



"Of course you can," said Ade, "but it doesn't do any good."

A Good Chance.

Little Bryda had been naughty and was to be punished. She asked leave to go to her room for a few minutes first, and this was granted. Her father followed, curious to know what she was going to do, and found her kneeling beside her bed, looking earnestly up at the ceiling.

"Please, God," she said, "I've been told you are good to little children. Well, now's your chance."

The punishment was not inflicted.

Sounded All Right.

Patience—Well, he told the truth, anyway.

Patrice—How so?

Patience—When he was buying the solitaire he told the jeweler it was for a sister.

Patrice—Well, I'm sure that wasn't true.

Patience—Why, yes; when he offered it to the girl she promised to be a sister to him.

The Editor's Mistake.

Great Statesman—"You were in rather a sad condition when you left the banquet the other night."

Reporter—"Yes; I drank more than was good for me."

Great Statesman—"So I noticed. And it showed in your report of my speech. It was terribly mixed up. Didn't the editor raise a row about it?"

Reporter—"No! he didn't blame me any. He thought you were drunk."

A Good Choice.

Father—"Mildred, if you disobey again I will surely spank you.

On father's return home that evening, Mildred once more acknowledged that she had again disobeyed.

Father (firmly)—"You are going to be spanked. You may choose your own time. When shall it be?"

Mildred (five years old, thoughtfully)—"Yesterday."

Gave Himself Away.

Mrs. Binks (with a disgusted air)—"That Aunt Sallie, who writes the articles in the household department of this paper, isn't a woman at all. It's a man."

Mr. Binks—"Why so?"

Mrs. Binks—"Here's an article that says woman's proper sphere is the home."

Unsolved.

"I wonder what those London suffragettes were throwing at?"

"Why, the papers are full of it."

"I haven't seen it mentioned."

"Why, every paper tells how they broke the plate-glass windows."

"I know it, but not a single paper tells what they were throwing at."

Dad Joins In.

The daughters of the household, ardent suffragists, were talking politics.

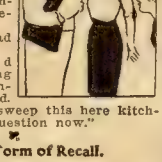
"Taft will sweep the country," declared Mabel.

"Wilson will sweep the country," asserted Maud.

"Roosevelt will sweep the country," averred Mehitable.

At this point dad took a hand.

"Never mind about who's going to sweep the country," said dad. "Who's going to sweep this here kitchen? That's the question now."



Another Form of Recall.

"Father, what do you think of the recall?"

"Well, my dear, I hardly know. Some people think it is dangerous. But why do you ask?"

"I sent Ferdy away last night and now I'm sorry."

Of Course.

"We are a democratic country, but——"

"Say the rest of it."

"When a woman buys a nutmeg grater she likes to know that it has been indorsed by many of the crowned heads of Europe."

Cheap Stuff.

Agnes—You saw Belle's wedding gifts; how was her silver marked?

Ethel—From the looks of it I should say most of it was marked down.

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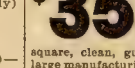

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MONEY $ $ for wise men. $ $ Key free. J. Warren Smith, Ottawa, Ill.

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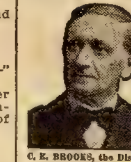

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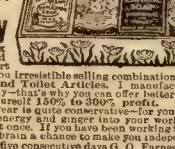

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My claim that you can make $800 per year is quite conservative—for you can actually make more than that if you want to hustle, and will put energy and pluck into your work. There is nothing to stand in your way. Take up this new business at once. If you have been working $25 a week with your hands and only 10% with your brain, reverse. Give your brain a chance to make you independent.

What Others Are Doing For five consecutive days G. O. Earnest averaged $3.00 an hour net profit. The following week, one day, he made $25 in 5 hours. He started without experience. Commenced the first day he got the plan. E. F. Newcomb runs above 3 orders a day—a profit of over $10 a week. J. C. Messick reports 45 to 65 sales a day—far beyond the $3000 a year mark. It is partly up to the man—up to you—our nobby goods and "The Plan" do the rest.

SPECIAL OFFER In order to immediately establish an agent in your territory, I am making a Special Offer whereby you can get this entire outfit, with a handsome, padded, waterproof leatherette case, without any cost to yourself, if you reply at once. Get my literature and valuable information now. This is no ordinary proposition—I talk big money for you, and I mean it. You can't afford not to write, no matter how much of a doubter you may be. Just a postal card or a letter saying "Send me your Plans" will bring you the whole proposition FREE. Send today. Address,

E. M. DAVIS, Pres., E. M. Davis Soap Co., 601 Davis Building, CHICAGO

Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1895, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

Single subscriptions to The Chicago Ledger by mail $1.00 a year, 50 cents for six months, in advance. Remittances should be made by Bank Draft, Registered Letter, Postoffice or Express money Order, payable to The Chicago Ledger. Subscription price in Canada $1.50 a year. We do not send receipts for money paid on subscriptions: the address tab on your paper shows the date to which your subscription is paid.

BACK NUMBERS.

Back numbers of the Ledger can be had by addressing this office. Always give the numbers desired, plainly written, accompanied by your full address, and your order will receive prompt attention. Price 5 cents per copy.

BEWARE OF STRANGERS.

The Ledger employs no traveling agents to solicit subscriptions, and every person working in that capacity is a fraud. No person is authorized to take subscriptions for the Ledger unless he or she be well known in the city or village where they have been appointed agents to sell this paper every week. A liberal reward will be paid for evidence that will enable us to arrest and convict such persons as are now traveling from town to town in different sections of this country, claiming to be agents of the Ledger and thereby defrauding the people. Beware of strangers

ADVERTISING.

Advertising rate $2.25 per Agate Line, per insertion for advertisements in the The Chicago Ledger and The Saturday Blade combined. These two weeklies have an average circulation of

1,000,000

COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS.

Many a gem of thought is injured by a bad setting.

Love makes the heart flutter and the tongue flatter.

Dishonest people try to do those they are dunned by.

It's easier to make love than it is always to mean it.

Unless a man is chicken-hearted he's seldom henpecked.

A woman who can speak seven languages generally does.

It is well to exercise your rights, but don't work them to death.

Every man's credit is good when it comes to borrowed trouble.

It's surprising how liberal most people are with their sympathy.

When poverty comes in at the door it never stops to wipe its feet.

Some people who tell everything they know don't have much to say.

No married man ever has more money than he knows what to do with.

You can sometimes do a friend a favor by refusing to give him advice.

All flesh is grass—and many a man in a dry town feels like a bale of hay.

If a man saves money it is because he is kept too busy at work to spend it.

It is never too soon to blame it on the other fellow when you make a mistake.

When a man is completely wrapped up in himself the package is apt to be small.

There is a remedy for almost every human ailment—including even a swelled head.

And many a woman has lost a good friend by leading him to the matrimonial altar.

A college education never hurts a boy if he has sense enough to go to work after it is all over.

When the average man has a chance to say a good word for his neighbor he is apt to go lame.

The man who is able to fight his own battles always has friends who are willing to do it for him.

Lend some men money and if they pay it back they will consider you under lasting obligations to them.

Hope springs eternal in the spinster's breast as long as she has enough ambition to put her hair up in curl papers.

GOOD INTENTIONS.

I read a little story
About the poor one day;
I thought it o'er and, sighing sore,
Remorsefully did say:
"I'll go and help the needy—
I do not know just how,
But, all the same, I'll do it,
And I will do it now."

I went to find some poor folk,
I took a street car—hence
I paid my fare both here and there,
Which cost me forty cents.
I traveled and I journeyed,
I hunted far and wide;
Until I spent the money
Which I had set aside.

At eve I met a woman
As poor as poor could be;
She was full old and peanuts sold—
Oh, deeps of misery!
All hungrily I watched her—
Alas, I had no pelf!
I stole a sack of peanuts
And fed them to myself.

Too Great a Blow.

Tom McNeal says he was talking on the general subject of wind when a certain a man from eastern Colorado happened along.

"I don't mind a reasonable amount of wind," said the man from Colorado, "but that country I came from suits me too well. I took up a claim out there and began to break up some sod. It was tough sod and I was plowing furrows about a mile long.

"Well, sir, as fast as I plowed the wind took after me along those furrows and rolled that sod up into a wheel; and when I was at the end of a furrow I had rolling along just behind me a sod wheel one hundred and seventy-five feet in diameter.

"It was so all the way. Half an hour after I had finished breaking up eight acres there wasn't a bit of sod left on the place. The wind had rolled the sod up and blown it away, and the country all around was full of sod wheels from my place. Caused quite a bit of damage, too, running along and knocking down cabins and filling railroad cuts!

"One day when we were going to church the wind blew off my wife's false hair—nice hair too. I got up one morning and put in my false teeth. When I went out to do the chores I opened my mouth to yawn—and the wind took them teeth and sailed them away like a bird, with the upper and lower jaws opening and shutting like wings! Had a glass eye blown out too. A trout got that.

"I could have stood all this, but my mother-in-law, who had been living with us, happened to die. We buried her seven feet deep—and I'll be switched if the wind didn't scoop the earth out of that grave two days later and blow that coffin plumb back to the house! When we got up in the morning we found it sitting there against the wall. That was even too much for me! I quit the country after that."

She Was So Sure.

A woman, who may be called Mrs. Smith, placed her umbrella against the counter at which she was making some purchases in a department store the other day and when she finished picked it up and started away. At least that was the way it ran through her mind.

"Pardon me," said a strange woman, "but you have my umbrella."

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Smith, "that is my umbrella."

"Pardon me again," insisted the strange woman, "but it is mine."

"I guess I know my umbrella," said Mrs. Smith, beginning to show fight. "If you have lost your umbrella I am sorry, but I can't give you mine."

"Did you carry two umbrellas when you left home?" asked the stranger.

Then Mrs. Smith discovered that she had an umbrella in each hand and she surrendered.

"Does Gladys look any different since she and her husband separated?"

"Yes, she wears her hair a la divorce."

"Heavens! How's that?"

"Parted."

WANT ADS

Want and Classified Advertising not less than 14 words accepted for insertion in the Ledger and Blade at 25 cents per word.

AGENTS WANTED

REMNANT STORE, Cincinnati. Greatest dry goods bargains on earth. Proposition to agents and storekeepers.

STARK BRO'S, Louisiana, Mo., Big Idea in tree selling. Best terms known to nursery world. Box B.

AGENTS—Patent lunch box; fits the pocket; write. Hawes Mnfg Co., Carthage, N. Y.

AGENTS Repeater, costs 5c, sells 50c to $1.00. Sample free. Thornber Laboratory, Ferris, Ill.

MAKE More Money Spare Time. $50.00 Course On Mail Order now appearing in "Good Results"—Greatest Mail Order Magazine Published. Three trial issues 10c. Publishers, 2211BL, N. 24 ave., Chicago.

AGENTS on salary or commission. The greatest agent's seller ever produced; every user of pen and ink buys it on sight; 200 to 500 per cent profit; one agent's sales amounted to $620 in six days; another $32 in two hours. Monroe Mnfg. Co., X., 96 La Crosse, Wis

HELP WANTED

SOUND men, 20 to 40 years old, wanted at once in every State for Electric Railway Motormen and Conductors; $60 to $100 month; no experience necessary; fine opportunity; no strike; write immediately for application blank. Address Mgr. Z., 552 Dwight Building, Kansas City, Missouri.

WANTED—Active man in each locality. To join this Society. And introduce our Memberships. Sick, accident, death benefits. All or spare time. Make $50 to $100 a month. Write Box CK-293, Covington, Ky.

WANTED—Men and Women—For Government positions, $80.00 month. Annual vacations. Short hours. No "layoffs." Common education sufficient. Over 12,000 appointments coming. Influence unnecessary. Farmers eligible. Franklin Institute, Dept 21, Rochester, N. Y.

LEARN the Barber Trade. Few weeks completes. We control many excellent positions. Tools given. Branches in all leading cities. For information regarding any one, write Dept. 10, Moler College, 738 South Wabash ave., Chicago, Ill

GOVERNMENT Post Office Examinations everywhere soon. Get prepared by former U. S. Civil Service Examiner. Write for Booklet B, Patterson Civil Service School, Rochester, N. Y.

WANTED—Immediately, men and women for Government Positions. Full Examinations everywhere. Prepare now. Trial Examination Free. Write, Ozment, K, St. Louis

WANTED—Reliable man in each locality who is interested in lodge work, either as president, secretary, deputy or member. If you know something about lodge work, how it is started, carried on, etc., and would like to turn that knowledge into some good money during your spare moments, write immediately to Box 9-409, Cincinnati, Ohio.

GOVERNMENT Farmers wanted. $60 00 monthly. Examination Oct. 16. Many needed. Write, Ozment, 68 F., St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS Make Big Money and become sales managers for our goods. Fast office sellers. Fine profits. Particulars and sample free. One Dip Pen Company, Dep't 15, Baltimore, Md

FREE Illustrated Book tells about over 160,000 protected positions in U. S. service. More than 40,000 vacancies every year. There is a big chance here for you, sure and generous pay, lifetime employment. Easy to get. Just ask for booklet, A 1034. No obligation. Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

EARN your way through College. (Don't pay cash.) Business College or Engineering College. Write Logan Square College, Edgewood ave., Chicago

SECRET Service—Pays Thousands of Dollars Yearly. We successfully train young men for all branches. Write: Secret Service, Martinsville, Virginia

MISCELLANEOUS

BARGAIN—Three fine neckties $1. Gold-plated Pin free. Ties and pin retail at $2.50. This offer is for short time only. Send $1 at once. Money refunded by return mail if not satisfied. Name colors desired. W. C. Watkins, Parnassus, Pa.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

LADIES can make shields at home; $10 per 100; work sent prepaid to reliable women. Particulars for stamped addressed envelope. Eureka Co., Dept. 17, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

MAKE a comfortable living at home sewing by plain seams. Any ordinary sewing machine. All home work. No canvassing. Steady. Sewers wanted in each town. No triflers reply. State how much time can sew. Send ten cents for postage, samples, etc. Returned if not satisfactory. Home Sewers Company, New York Jobbers Sewing, "BL" Dept., Rehoboth, Delaware.

PATENTS

THE Patentome is interesting and instructive. A liberal education in patents and how to get them. Free on request. Established 1865. Anderson & Son, Patent Solicitors, 713 G st., Washington, D. C.

PROTECTIVE Patents procured promptly. Our books telling how to obtain and realize therefrom sent on request. Write today. Trade Marks Registered. Beeler & Robb, 248-252 Southern Bldg., Washington, D. C.

PATENTS secured. Send sketch and if possible model for free Experts Search and Report as to patentability. Books on inventions and patents, and reference book, sent free. John S. Duffie & Co., Dep't 7, Washington, D. C.

PATENTS That Protect—Patent your ideas; they may bring you wealth; 64 page book free. Fitz Gerald & Co., Dept. W, Washington, D. C.

REAL ESTATE

TEN acres Ozark Farm, Cottage, Barn. Price, $340. Monthly Installments. Edmund Steckel, Richland, Mo. Turkey Ridge Farm.

FRUIT LANDS—Beautiful Kootenay Valley, B. C. 88 acres, sub-divided into 2 4-acre tracts, 11 of 5-acres and 3 of 25 acres. The 25-acre tract is improved, has dwelling, stable, ice-house, etc. All for a limited time at the low price of $6,000. Adjoining land held at $200 per acre. Will cost you nothing to write and investigate. Owner forced to realize thereon. ¼ cash, balance easy terms. Only six hours from Spokane, Wash. Pure water, ideal climate and very low taxes. Address D. P. Dulmage, Morgan Park, Illinois

PERSONAL

MARRY—Best plan on earth, sent free photo of every lady member. The Pilot, Dept. 674, Marshall, Mich.

MARRY wealth and beauty. Marriage Directory Free. Pay when married. New plan. Ladies send description in first letter. Box 314 A., Kansas City, Mo.

MARRIAGE Paper Free; best published for sure results; reliable. Eastern Agency 55, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

MARRY Rich—Matrimonial paper of highest character, containing hundreds of photos and descriptions of marriageable people with means; mailed free, sealed; either sex. Write. One may be your ideal. Standard Cor. Club, Box 607, Grays Lake, Illinois.

MARRY—Photos, descriptions and P. O. address of pretty, rich ladies and gents, want to marry, free. H. Jahn, St. Paul, Minn.

LOVINE never fails. Every package guaranteed. Either sex 10c. Two packages sealed 20c. Union, Box 100N, Palatine, Illinois.

MARRY—Book of descriptions and photos mailed sealed, FREE. The Exchange, Box 525 B., Kansas City, Mo.

COME all ye lonely bachelors and maids, write, enclose stamp. Friendship Circle, Oneida, N. Y.

MARRIAGE Paper—Highest Character; Incorporated; 16th year; 8,000 members; paper sealed; send 10c. B. W. Love, Box 1600, Denver, Colo.

MARRY, thousands wealthy, anxious for early marriage, descriptions free. Confidential, 268 Market st., San Francisco, Calif.

MARRY—Interesting particulars (FREE.) Thousands Rich, all ages, tired living alone. Write Mrs. Hyde, 2682 Mission, San Francisco, California.

POSTCARDS Free—Send 10c to join large postcard exchange and get 5 postcards free. Postcard Exchange, Box 1017, Seneca, Penna.

Early Rising.

Early to bed and early to rise is the latest craze of society. The fashion was set by a number of smart women whose physician held in high disdain their sacred custom of breakfasting in bed. In favor of the benefits to be derived from an adherence to the old adage, he says:

"Practically ninety per cent of us rise an hour too late. Everybody up to the age of sixty years should be downstairs by seven o'clock. Then a two-mile walk, a ride on horseback, or a cycle spin should follow. Lack of money is no excuse, for walks cost nothing but effort. If this course were followed there would be a real desire for a hearty breakfast—a desire which I suppose is absent in ninety-nine per cent of the people who rise late. While it is easy to develop an appetite for subsequent meals of the day, breakfast is different. For several hours one has been in bed, and a fresh supply of oxygen is necessitated. This can be obtained by genuine exercise before the meal, not by a casual stroll on the veranda.

"But this early rising is not good unless there is also an early retiring. Children used formerly to go to bed at eight o'clock and their parents at eleven. Nowadays the children go to bed at the latter hour and the parents the next morning. If early hours were made habitual, a vast amount of neurasthenia, nervous breakdowns, and cases of melancholia would be avoided."

Our Feathered Friends.

Rose Pastor Phelps-Stokes, during a recent visit to Philadelphia, told at a charity society a country-week story.

"Under an old apple tree," she said, "I gathered a half-dozen little country-weekers about me one August afternoon, and holding up a book, I said:

"'Now, children, I'm going to read to you. This is the book. It is called "Our Feathered Friends." Who are our feathered friends, does any one know?'

"The urchins on the grass regarded one another doubtfully; then a little chap piped in a shrill key:

"'Angels?'"

EVERY PRETTY WOMAN

whose comeliness of face, neck or arms is marred by a growth of hair or fuzz, should try Delatone. With water this harmless powder is made into a paste and spread on the hairy surface. When rubbed off after a few minutes, the hair has vanished and skin remains uninjured. Delatone is a scientific preparation—safe, sure and speedy—now used by thousands and highly recommended by Mrs. Mae Martyn, the eminent authority on "Beauty." If your druggist cannot supply you with Delatone; a one-ounce jar will be mailed you upon receipt of $1, by Sheffield Pharmacal Co., 2285 Sheffield Ave., Dept. M, Chicago.

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years, and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

J. P.

Those suffering from weakness and lack of vigor should take JUVEN PILLS. One box will tell a story of marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever before been offered. Sent postpaid only on receipt of this advertisement and $1. Made by its originators, C. I. HOOD CO., proprietors Hood's Sarsaparilla, LOWELL, MASS. (2)

Her Warning.

A Kansas City salesman who frequently makes trips to neighboring towns, at which times he does not get home until about midnight, returned a few nights ago and was stealing carefully up the stairs, so as not to disturb his wife, when he heard her voice. "I don't know whether you are my husband or a burglar, but I am going to be on the safe side and shoot. So if you are Henry you'd better get out of the way."

The flighty girl may not be angelic.

STOMACH SUFFERERS

Avoid Dangerous Operations. Let Me Send You a

Free $1.00 Bottle

of My Wonderful STOMACH REMEDY

I want every one suffering from **Stomach, Liver or Intestinal Troubles** and **Gall Stones** to send at once for a **Free Bottle.**

It is a marvelous remedy for

Stomach, Liver and Intestinal Trouble, Gastritis, Indigestion, Dyspepsia, Pressure of Gas around the Heart, Sour Stomach, Distress after eating, Nervousness, Dizziness, Fainting Spells, Constipation, Congested and Torpid Liver, Yellow Jaundice, Sick Headache, Appendicitis and Gall Stones

Don't allow your Stomach Trouble to become so bad that an operation is necessary. Don't permit an operation until you have at least tried this FREE Bottle.

The above ailments are mainly caused by the clogging of the intestinal tract with mucoid and catarrhal accretions, backing up poisonous fluids into the stomach, and otherwise deranging the digestive system. I want every sufferer of any of these diseases to test this wonderful treatment. You are not asked to take this treatment for a week or two before you feel its great benefits—only one dose is usually required. I say emphatically it is a positive, permanent remedy and I will prove it to you if you will allow me to, and I again repeat I will send the complete $1.00 treatment to you absolutely Free so you can try it in your own home at my expense.

The most eminent specialists declare a big per cent of the people who suffer from Stomach Trouble are suffering from **Gall Stones.** I firmly believe that this remedy is the only one in the world that will cure this disease. Sufferers of Stomach and Liver troubles and **Gall Stones** should not hesitate a moment, but send for this **Free** treatment at once.

I have watched sick people for years and have reached out my hands to thousands in the great depth of the Valley of Despair and brought them into the light of life and happiness. I want you, and each one suffering to know the full joys of living with every part of your system in beautiful accord and in absolute perfect harmony. This is possible if you will take this wonderful remedy. A FREE BOTTLE will positively prove it.

Don't Lose Hope

Why suffer with stomach trouble? Why give up hope—and despair of ever being cured? If other treatments have failed and you feel disheartened, don't allow it to discourage you from sending for this **Free** bottle. Don't say to yourself that it will not help you, before you have tried it, as it costs you nothing to take this wonderful remedy and judge for yourself its marvelous powers. You will, like the thousands of others who have been cured, bless the hour and offer fervent thanks for this wonderful remedy that has brought back your health.

Don't suffer all this pain; don't doss yourself with many medicine and try every treatment when Mayr's Wonderful Stomach Remedy, which has cured and made thousands and thousands of sufferers happy is offered to you. Mayr's Wonderful Stomach Remedy is entirely pure and harmless. It is guaranteed under the Pure Food and Drug Act—Serial No. 28792. This medicine has been successfully taken by children of nine years of age, and by old people of eighty-eight years and will not harm you in any way.

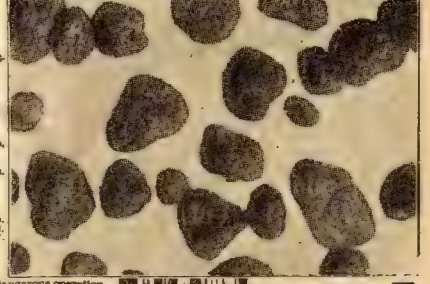
Why suffer with those horrid griping pains that cut like a knife? They rob you of all the sweets of happiness. Each morning means another day of torture and agony; each meal is looked forward to with pain. No matter what you eat, you suffer. Life is one continual round of "Don't eat this and don't eat that." You can't sit down to a table, spread with necessities of life and know that you are going to enjoy them; that they are going to be turned into rich, red blood and strength which will give you vitality, health and happiness.

Below we show an exact Photograph—actual size of Poisonous Catarrhal Mucoid and Bile Accretions removed by my remedy. They are the causes of about 99% of all Stomach, Liver and Intestinal Ailments.

Almost every one who takes it declares that they have not felt so well in years since they have taken the first bottle, and this benefit is an entirely natural one, as the remedy contains no opiate, stimulant or any poisonous or injurious ingredients whatever. They are able to eat anything they want—even forget they have such a thing as a stomach. No more of the gnawing, aching dull sensations, no more paroxysms of pain, belching of gases, and other symptoms of indigestion that stomach trouble produces.

A Few Names of People who have taken My Wonderful Stomach Remedy—and who state they have been CURED of various Stomach, Liver and Intestinal Ailments and Gall Stones.

Phil Strain, Bloomington, Ill.
Alma Loving, Russellville, Miss.
Mrs. Thomas Mulvihill, Detroit, Mich.
Mattie Kirkham, Fountain Head, Tenn.
W. G. Riddell, Burlington, Ky., Rd. No. 9
Mrs. E. F. Cady, Auburn, N. Y.
H. D. Chappell, Agt. Amer. Exp. Co., Scotland, Archer Co., Tex.
W. H. Kingsley, Beulah, Miss.
J. W. Blackburn, Fryar, Ark.
Henry Oaks, New River, Tenn.
Henry Thomas, Mabrud, Miss.
Mr. M. A. McCann, Norwalk, Ohio.
Ralph Johnson, McComb, Miss.
Mrs. Callie Wells, 1123 Harrison St., Guthrie, Okla.
S. R. Allen, Buckeye, W. Va.
Chas. L. Morse, 8 Pearl St. Middleboro, Mass.
W. P. Cowan, Celina, Tenn.
Fred Zwicke, Grand Rapids, Wis.
Estelle McAllister, Ludlow, S. D.
B. A. Dooley, 21 Union St., Clinton, Mass.
Mrs. E. C. Daughtery, Conway, Pa., Beaver, Co.
Sarah E. Johnson, 1107 Bell St. Mt. Vernon, Ill.
Mrs. D. Burghduff, 9 Walnut St., Auburn, N.Y.
John Driver, Dunkirk, Ind.
W. D. Barr, 601 Walnut St., Irwin, Pa.
Mr. W. E. Cobb, Wichita Falls, Kans.



My last word to you—Don't permit a dangerous operation. Not until you have tried this FREE BOTTLE. I care not how long you have suffered or how severe your case may be, I am confident my wonderful and harmless remedy will entirely and quickly restore you to perfect health without any ill effect. It has saved thousands from operations. It should you. I believe that eighty per cent of the operations are unnecessary and the knife could be avoided if the proper method of treatment was administered. Quite often sufferers of Stomach and Intestinal ailments or Gall Stones are told they have cancer of the stomach and other rare diseases.

You are not asked to take this treatment for a week or two before you feel its great benefits. One dose is all that is necessary to prove its wonderful powers to CURE.

GEO. H. MAYR, Mfg. Chemist,
388 Mayr Building, 156 Whiting Street, Chicago

References: Mercantile Agencies or State Bank of Chicago

Read These Letters

WHAT A PROMINENT PHYSICIAN HAS TO SAY OF MY WONDERFUL STOMACH REMEDY.

Sept. 12th, 1911.

Mr. Geo. H. Mayr, Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir:—My wife received your letter and treatment a few days ago. She took the medicines as per directions Saturday with wonderful results, as she passed a large quantity of gall stones of various sizes. I will send you a money order herewith for balance of treatment. Have recommended you to several that I know need your treatment. I have practiced medicine 20 years and have used Olive Oil treatments for a long time for my wife, and I can assure you that your combination greatly surprised me. You shall hear from me again soon.

Yours gratefully,
ERNEST VINCENT, M. D.

WHAT A TRAINED NURSE HAS TO SAY.

Aug. 24th, 1911.

Mr. Geo. H. Mayr, Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir:—To begin with I am a trained nurse and I had two patients that the doctors seemed unable to reach with their medicines and were trying to persuade the patient to submit to the knife. A friend who has tried your Wonderful medicine proposed that I recommend it to my patient, so I did. They agreed to try the medicine if I would try the sample on myself. To please my patients was why I sent for the sample. I know that your medicine is wonderful because it has cured Mrs. Clark Fitzsimmons of Orofino, Idaho and Mrs. Charley Frear of the same place. I am very glad that I was able to recommend your medicine to them.

LIBERTIA HAVEL, Trained Nurse,
Box 284, Orofino, Idaho.

CURED AFTER FIVE YEARS SICKNESS.

Mr. George H. Mayr, Chicago, Ill.

I am pleased to inform you that I ordered a full treatment the latter part of March. It cured me after a five years spell of sickness. I ordered a free bottle for a neighbor. Now I must tell you it is through me you are getting so many orders from Willard and Yelton Post Offices. I sojourned through Eastern Colorado and sang your praises and left your address wherever I went. I have not written you at an earlier date as I have just waited to see if I stayed cured before I let you know. Your remedy is surely a wonder. The Doctors told me I had appendicitis and would soon die if I were not operated on, I was lying in bed about all the time with misery most of the time for five years. I took treatment during March, have been busy ever since. It is the only medicine that hit the sore spot.—L. C. MOREHEAD, Willard, Oklahoma.

Doctor Said Cancer of the Stomach

July 22, 1911.

Mr. Geo. H. Mayr, Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir:—I write you this morning that I took my last drop of medicine yesterday morning and am now free from gall stones. It has made a new man of me. Sleep well, eat what I want and feel fine. No soreness left but I have some large boils. I think it drove them out. The Doctors said I had cancer of the stomach, and nothing would do but to be operated on, but they were mistaken. I have spent lots of money before and only got temporary relief, but I assure you I feel all right now. Passed about 400 gall stones.

Yours truly, WM. CAMPBELL,
Denver, Missouri

More Benefit Than From a $100 Treatment

May 21, 1910.

Mr. Geo. H. Mayr, Chicago, Ill.

I rec'd the treatment you sent and can truthfully say I got more benefit from it than from a hundred dollar treatment I took last winter.

Very Respectfully,
MRS F. A. HARNESS,
1020 Pacific Ave., Bremerton, Wash.

Fill out this FREE coupon now and mail to me. The full $1.00 bottle will be sent you without delay. Send no money—your name and address on the coupon is all—MAIL IT TODAY—WRITE PLAINLY.

GEO. H. MAYR, MFG. CHEMIST, 388 Mayr Bldg., 156 Whiting St., Chicago.

Send me absolutely FREE, $1.00 treatment of Mayr's Wonderful Stomach Remedy.

Name .....

Address ..... City .....

County ..... State ..... Express Office S-11

Don't Wear a Truss

FREE TRIAL OF PLAPAO

STUART'S PLAS-TR-PADS are different from the truss, being medicine applicators made self adhesive purposely to hold the parts securely in place. No straps, buckles or springs—cannot slip, so cannot chafe or compress against the pubic bone. The most obstinate cases cured. Thousands have successfully treated themselves at home without hindrance from work. Soft as velvet—easy to apply—inexpensive. Process of recovery is natural, so no further use for truss. Awarded Gold Medal. We prove what we say by sending you Trial of Plapao absolutely FREE. Write name on coupon and mail TODAY. Address—

PLAPAO LABORATORIES, Block 44 St. Louis, Mo.

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Our Boys' Corner

Boy-Scout Adventures

Or, Lost in the Everglades

By St. George Rathborne

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CHAPTER I

THE SEA OF GRASS.

"WHAT luck, Amos?"

"I'm afraid it's no go, Dolph. The engine has just petered out, and that's all there is to it."

"That's a dandy prospect, I must say! Here we are, just about halfway between the old Atlantic and the Gulf, with nothing but a wilderness of waving grass and shallow water around us!"

The boy who spoke these last words in a tone of disgust stooped down, and lifting a string of small fish from the bottom of the queer-looking canvas dinghy in which he just paddled up, cast them aboard the sixteen-foot power-boat.

Amos Shackelford, his chum, looked overheated and dirty, after more than a full hour of wrestling with the balky engine that utterly refused to be good. Nevertheless, he was a good-natured son of Michigan, and the disconsolate look on the sunburned face of his South Carolina cousin, Dolph Harding, seemed rather to tickle him, for presently he burst out into a hearty laugh.

"I can sight a clump of trees over yonder."

"Well," remarked Dolph, with a shrug of his shoulders, "I suppose you look at things differently from me. I'm always borrowing trouble, while it sets as easy on your back as water on a mallard. But what shall we do?"

"First of all, I'm going to wash up, and get some of this oil and grime off my face and hands," replied the other, cheerfully.

"You can spare a heap of it, and still not miss it, Amos. And while you're amusing yourself that way I suppose I might as well tackle these fellows and get 'em ready for the pan. As long as our supply of oil holds out, I don't suppose we stand in any danger of starving down here, eh?"

"That's the least of my worries," the other remarked, as he set to work with soap and warm water; "the greatest trouble will be to pole and row this clumsy affair over the many miles between here and the Gulf. But, it's all in the game, old chap, and don't let's kick just yet. It might be worse, you know, much worse."

Dolph could not resist this line of reasoning, especially when accompanied by that cheery smile for which his cousin was noted.

"I reckon you're just about right, Amos. And I'm going to show that while I like to have my little growl occasionally, deep down I'm just as good a sport as you, any day." Saying which he began operations on the captured fish, and for some little time both boys were busily engaged.

The little motor-boat was one they had purchased in Miami. It had originally been called the Sylph; but after a little experience with the balky engine, Amos had insisted on renaming the craft as the Vixen; and more than ever was he positive just now that she deserved the credit of the new title.

Being somewhat of an experienced hand at motors of all kinds, Amos believed he had conquered the eccentricities of that stubborn engine before they were ready to leave Miami; else he would never have consented to undertake that long trip across the peninsula through uncharted channels, where it was so easy to lose one's way. And after doing a record stunt for several days, to the great delight of the young voyagers, here the freakish machine had taken to sulking again, on this occasion more positively than ever before.

"What time is it, Amos?" asked the fisherman, whose hands were so occupied with his job that he could not possibly look for himself.

The Michigan lad threw a quick glance over his shoulder at the declining sun.

"About an hour high," he remarked; "and last night she dropped out of sight at four-forty-eight. I guess then, it must be about half-past three."

Drawing out a little dollar nickel watch, which answered all the purposes of rough usage on a cruise, in that Amos often drove tacks by using it in lieu of a hammer, he held it up, smilingly.

"Just what I said, to the fraction of a minute. That's guessing some, eh, Dolph? But I know what you've got on your mind, old fellow," he said.

"The night is coming on, and we'd better keep our eyes peeled for some place to tie up to. Between you and me and the lamppost, which isn't here at all, I don't just like the looks of that bank of clouds hanging low down in the southwest."

Amos stood up the better to see, and even shaded his eyes with his hand.

He was something of a weather prophet up in his native State; but conditions were new to him down here, and he had to depend pretty much on what he had heard or read, mingled with plain common sense.

"Perhaps you're right, Dolph," he remarked, presently; "we experienced two mild northers while at Miami, and both times I noticed that just before they swooped down on us the clouds hung like that, in the southwest."

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"And say, it's going to be some different, being snugly housed in that hotel, and out on this endless stretch of grass and water," the Southern boy said, as he laid the last dressed fish down, after which he started to wash his hands.

"Oh! well, I imagine that no matter how the wind howls it can't get up much of a sea here, with all this tall grass to break its force. But it seems to me, Dolph, I can sight a clump of trees over yonder, right in the sun."

"Bully for that, if we can only make the island!" exclaimed the other, seizing one of the oars and settling it into place as though he meant business.

"We're going to make a big try for it, anyway," grunted Amos, also taking up his position where he could pull steadily.

The clumsy boat advanced at a slow pace, as if loath to push through the channels winding this way and that through the network of tall grass. In a general way they kept heading straight toward the declining sun. When possibly twenty minutes had passed in this way, Dolph paused in his labor to wipe the perspiration from his face, while his cousin elevated himself on the thwart in order to take an observation ahead.

"How?" demanded Dolph, who had rubbed up against several Seminoles during their stay of a week in Miami, and rather fancied the expressive way these natives of the Everglades had of using single words to cover their meanings—especially when he was winded from his muscular efforts.

"It is an island, all right!" declared Amos, presently.

"Huh! that's comforting, anyhow," said the Southern lad. "Then we must be nearer than when you looked before, because you seem so dead certain now."

"Sure we are; and I just guess we'd better buckle to, and do some more of the pulling act. My! but the old tub drags along slow. Molasses in winter don't compare with the way she moves along through the water, Dolph!"

"Now, just you forget all that, my boy. This boat has her faults, I know, but they lie in the engine department, and not in her hull. She's roomy for a craft of her size, and stanch. You can't deny that," asserted Dolph; for it had been his suggestion that they purchase the Vixen, and take the contemplated cruise in a power-boat, rather than a Seminole dugout.

Once again the two boys started to urge the boat onward with manful strokes; but as they were compelled to follow the devious channels, instead of keeping straight ahead, direct progress was indeed slow. While they are so industriously pulling, it might be just as well for us to explain who they were, and what brought them down in this region of water and sawgrass in the month of January.

Amos was the son of a well-to-do lumber man away up in Michigan. He had contracted a cold through exposure in the icy water of the half-frozen river; and the family doctor, knowing that his mother had weak lungs, insisted on his spending the winter in the South. But to look at the sturdy chap now one would rather imagine that he was in for having a picnic, since he certainly showed no evidence of sickness.

Dolph Harding's father was a well-known doctor in Charleston, South Carolina. The boy had readily won his parent's consent when Amos proposed this Florida trip; and the result was they had come down as far as Miami. By degrees the project of making a trip across to the West Coast took possession of them. Then followed the purchase of the power-boat, and the start.

In his home town Amos belonged to a Boy Scout patrol, an even acted as scout-leader, being pretty well versed in woods lore. As his cousin was connected with another organization in Charleston, the boys from time to time entered into warm discussions concerning the merits of the Wolverine Patrol and that of the Swamp Fox, as the Southern troop was known. Dolph was not so well versed in the secrets of the wilderness as his Michigan cousin, and hence he depended on Amos to utilize his knowledge of woodcraft in order to lighten the burdens of their strange cruise.

After another period of grunting and pulling Amos took a second observation.

"Are we any closer to the blamed old hamak?" demanded the other, steaming with moisture from his strenuous work, and a little ill-tempered; for Dolph was, like most boys of the South, quick-tempered and hasty.

"No doubt of it," returned his cousin, confidently.

"But we don't make it by sundown. Am I right?" demanded Dolph.

"Oh! what difference does that make? Before it gets plumb dark we're going to haul up there, and don't you forget it," said Amos, dropping back and picking up his car with a resolute look on his face.

When Amos once started on a thing he showed many of the determined qualities of a bulldog, and hated ever to give up.

After a while the sun began to set, back of the low-lying bank of clouds. Both boys kept doggedly at work, for while Dolph may not have possessed quite as much muscle as his Northern cousin, he certainly was not lacking in staying qualities, and that counts just as well in the end.

Twilight gave way gradually to the shades of night. Amos had taken great care to secure his bearings, lest they get bewildered, once darkness surrounded them. In this manner they were able to keep right along, though Dolph was puffing like a porpoise with impending exhaustion.

"I set it right ahead. Hold out three minutes more, and we'll strike solid ground!" exclaimed the pilot of the expedition.

"That gives me new life, Amos. I'll hold out, or burst the boiler trying," gasped Dolph, again gripping the oar with his blistered hands and shutting his teeth hard together.

About the time that the required three minutes had expired there was a sudden violent shock.

"Run on a snag, and in sight of port!" cried Dolph, who had gone floundering over on his back.

"I rather guess it's bottom we've struck. Hold on, and I'll jump into the dinghy to explore the situation. Perhaps there's deeper water on either side. Anyhow, here we are, twenty feet from land, and with palmetto trees nearly overhead."

As he spoke Amos, still grasping his oar, proceeded gingerly to climb over the stern of the power-boat into the cranky little canvas seven-foot tender. It was of the collapsible order, and while very useful for getting ashore in shallow water, the dinghy had its faults, the worst of which was a tendency to turn turtle at the slightest provocation. Still breathing hard after his recently unusually severe labor, Dolph saw his comrade until the painter of the small craft.

"Take care, and don't upset, Amos," he cautioned, as the other pushed away on his little tour of investigation.

He could just manage to follow the course of the canvas boat in the gloom, for it seemed to leave a phosphorescent wake astern. Suddenly, to the consternation of Dolph, there was a tremendous splash, accompanied by an outcry from his chum; staring ahead, he was positive that he saw the frail canvas boat churning in a sea of foam, and the figure of Amos taking a header into the agitated water!

CHAPTER II.

AT THE STORM'S MERCY.

"Amos, what is it? Are you hurt?" shouted the alarmed boy aboard the power-boat.

Since the craft had rammed her nose in the mud, he was utterly helpless to go to the aid of his chum; and indeed for the moment he could not imagine what all of the tremendous racket meant.

A voice half-stifled with the water that had been swallowed by Amos, answered him:

"Oh! I guess I'm all right, even if I am in up to my neck. I've found a deeper channel here, bet your boots, Dolph!"

"Well, you made an awful lot of fuss finding it," returned the other, although secretly greatly relieved to know that nothing more serious than a spill had overtaken his cousin.

"Wait till I get my oar here, and pull the pesky little boat ashore. Then I'll empty out the water and come to guide you in," called the energetic one; threshing about, as he groped for his possessions that floated close by.

"Not the same way you took, if I know it. Tll push off this mudbank, and work to the right for a channel. What made all that noise, Amos?"

"Oh! I guess we disturbed a big 'gator snoozing on the bank, and he jumped in just missing me by a yard," replied Amos.

"What? Do you mean it was one of the scaly things camping on our island?" ejaculated the South Carolina boy, who while familiar with the Saurian tribe could never seem to fancy them in the least.

"I like your nerve in claiming this little old island at first sight," laughed the one now ashore. "Perhaps that old crusty has been holding the fort for fifty years or more. But he woke up when we began to talk, and seeing me come along, took a header overboard. Geel if he'd ever hit this chip of a boat he'd have gone clean through it."

"Then the waves upset you—was that it?" continued Dolph, who always wanted to know all the particulars.

"I was kneeling at the time, and you know what that means in this pumpkin-seed of a boat. She turned turtle like fun, and what could I do but swim? The water's fine, though, and the mud soft.

(Continued on page nineteen.)

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Boy Scout Adventures.

(Continued from page seventeen.)

Suppose you get overboard and pull the boat in?"

"You'll have to excuse me, old boy; I never did admire the teeth of a bull 'gator; and don't want to furnish a dinner to one of them, just yet. You come out here and lend a hand. There, she moved that time; she's coming off all right, Amos!"

Between them they managed to work the larger boat in until the painter could be carried ashore, and secured to the nearest palmetto tree, of which there seemed to be several on the little tuft of dry land thrust up in the midst of the apparently interminable wilderness of water and grass.

"Now for a fire of some sort," said Dolph, when this job had been completed to their satisfaction.

"I guess that suits me some," remarked the other, whose teeth were beginning to chatter with the cold; for the air was not so very balmy just then for one who had been wholly submerged in the water.

In Florida, particularly where the palmetto trees are in evidence, it is a very easy thing to start a blaze. The dead leaves, with their three or four foot stalks, make a splendid fire, though quickly consumed. In two minutes Dolph had gathered a bunch of flimsy fuel. Then a match was struck and immediately a flame sprang into existence.

"Say, that feels something like," remarked the wet cruiser, holding out his hand to the glowing fire. "Would you mind going aboard and tossing me out my clothes bag? I've just got to get some dry stuff on me right away. Why, I'd freeze stiff if a norther caught me in this shape, and that's no lie."

Dolph readily complied, for he appreciated what his cousin said. As for himself, son of a warm clime that he was, he had very little liking for cold weather, and already found himself dreading these periodical visits of the chilly winds from the frozen North.

While Amos was changing to dry clothes the other was making ready for supper. He "toted" ashore the messchest and various other things, busied himself in getting the prepared fish in the frying-pan, after "trying out" a piece of salt pork, and heating the grease to a fierce point. Before each fish went into the pan it was carefully dusted with cracker dust, of which a couple of packages had been brought along. Amos finished his dressing in time to take upon himself the job of making the coffee, that always being his particular task, in which he excelled.

Hardly half an hour had passed after their dramatic coming when the two boys were sitting there, discussing a bountiful meal; for a can of Boston baked beans had been opened and heated, while some crackers afforded a variety to the repast.

"What's the matter with this?" demanded Dolph, as he crossed his legs, tailor-fashion, with his pannikin on his knees, and a cup of fragrant Java near at hand.

The outfit belonged to Amos, who had used it many times up in his Northern country. It was a complete aluminum camping outfit, being arranged for four persons. The various utensils nested in each other, and even the handle of the frying-pan was detachable; thus the entire affair occupied a minimum of space, and weighed comparatively few pounds. When not in use it reposed in a canvas waterproof case.

"Nothing that I can see," laughed Amos, putting down his cup, after sipping some of the hot contents to take the last of the chill out of his system. "In fact, it seems a bully bunk to me. I think we're mighty lucky to run across this little old alligator nest in the middle of the inland sea. Perhaps there isn't another like it for miles around."

"That's so; but it's open to the wind, all right; and once that starts blowing no fire could live here," remarked Dolph.

"All right. We've got a bully boat tied up right close, and know how to fasten the cover down good and tight. Guess we can stand it out, if that norther does break in on us."

Amos was something of an optimist, and always saw the bright side of things; while his cousin was apt to conjure specters that might after all have no real existence; to be plain, Dolph often borrowed trouble. They sat and chatted while they finished their meal.

"Hey! looky there, will you!" exclaimed Amos, suddenly jumping up, as he was gathering his several camp dishes together.

"You mean the clouds are creeping up in the sky?" observed the other, following the direction of the outstretched finger.

"Yes, and we'd better get a hustle on us, or after all we'll be nipped. Never mind about washing dishes tonight. Bundle the lot aboard, together with everything else we brought ashore. I'm going to get our tarpaulin out, and begin to button it around the boat."

Dolph needed no second urging. That angry sky was enough to tell him how the clouds were beginning to sweep toward the zenith. He knew that the storm would break from the southwest, quickly swing around into the northwest, the weather turn bitterly cold for this Southern climate; and finally the wind would roar out of the north for days, since these terrible norther usually last sixty hours at a stretch.

Both of them worked energetically. Dolph managed to stow away all the traps that had been taken ashore, while his comrade started to get the heavy canvas fastened snugly, so that they might defy the elements.

After all, they were through none too soon; for Amos had hardly finished every part of his task but the stern when suddenly there was a suspicious sound heard among the tops of the palmetto trees that looked like great feather-dusters against the somber sky, as Amos always declared.

"She's coming!" cried Dolph, who was in the tender alongside, helping with the fastenings of the tarpaulin.

"That's rain, and the wind will follow it close. Crawl inside, Dolph, unless you want to take the same medicine I had, and get ducked," and the Michigan boy helped his chum creep under cover.

Already the patter of heavy drops came down upon the stretched tarpaulin. This soon grew heavier, until the rain was beating down furiously. Then came the wind with a sudden savage roar that was almost terrifying, especially when they remembered that the tiny island was like an oasis in the far stretching desert of water that lay to the west, the east, the north, and the south.

For some time the boys cuddled there under the blankets, and listened to the wild whoop of the storm. Now and then they would exchange a few remarks; but the conditions hardly favored extended conversation. An hour after their retirement Dolph found his teeth chattering.

"Hey! what's this?" he exclaimed. "Are we going to freeze stiff here in our bunk?"

"Oh! I guess not," answered the other, as he reached out for his extra blanket "you know we've got that fine little Jewel oil stove aboard. It's cooked many a meal for me, and if we get too cold, why what's to hinder our starting her up?"

"Glad to hear it," grunted Dolph, as he copied the other's example in making use of his second covering; "and anyhow, we oughtn't to kick at this harbor. It's a whole heap better than being anchored out in the open. Ugh!"

The wind had settled down to a steady pull, and made a roaring sound among the tops of the palmettoes not unlike the rush of a freight train on a down-grade.

"By ginger! I forgot something!" exclaimed Amos, suddenly.

"Hey! you gave me an awful jolt then! Want to frighten me to death yet, do you? What struck you, old fellow?" cried the other, who was cuddled up as close to his comrade as possible.

"That cable—I really meant to overhaul it again before turning in," replied Amos, struggling to arise.

"Lie still, can't you? Just when I was getting to feel good, and dropping off asleep too. What ails the cable? Isn't it snug?" grumbled Dolph.

"Well, you see, I wasn't sure that I fastened it as securely as I'd like; perhaps I ought to climb out there right now, and make certain," began Amos, when he was pulled back by his chum.

"Rats! Of course you fastened it with a double hitch. I think it would have held all this time if you didn't. Just roll over, and forget about it. We'll he all to the good in the morning, if the plagued wind don't just rip this cover off. Wow! I hope that don't happen! Go to sleep, I tell you, Amos. You're a regular old alarm clock, hang it!"

Amos relapsed once more into silence, and being tired after his exertions of the late afternoon, he presently succumbed to the warmth of their condition, losing himself in sound slumber. So the wind continued to swoop past, causing the trees to bend and moan; while the waves dashed against the other side of the tiny knoll in the midst of that angry sea.

Dolph's mind in his dreams went back to his Carolina home. Once again he was engaged in some boyish sport with his schoolmates; perhaps striving to win a swimming race that would give him certain coveted points in his endeavor to attain the degree of a first-class Scout.

He fancied that he was coming in neck and neck with a bitter rival, and exerting himself to the utmost to break the deadlock, when all of a sudden he realized that some one was shaking him desperately.

"Wake up! wake up here!"

Why, it was Amos, his cousin from Michigan! Where could they be, and what did this violent pitching mean? Dolph lurched sideways, and came in collision with the one who had gripped his arm, and was shaking him.

"W—w—what's all this row about, Amos?" he managed to shout.

"Look out and see for yourself!" cried the other, lifting the edge of the canvas cover a little.

When Dolph looked he gave a whoop of surprise. The moon must be shining behind the clouds overhead, for he could see a vast agitated sea of churning water, over which they appeared to be moving, with the boat rocking violently.

"That cable did give way after all then?" he exclaimed, remembering.

"Yes, and we're afloat on the boundless sea, and liable to capsize any minute!" declared Amos, grimly.

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

Woman's Wonderful Ways.

Why will weeping widows, who wear weeds, work wonders with wealthy widowers, while winsome wee women, whose witching ways, without woful wear, would win, were wise wives wanted.

Without wasting words, we will write, whimsically, why widow Wilhelmina Wood's warm wooing was wholly wrecked. Whereas when worthy widower Willie Weston, who was wealthy, went walking with widow Wilhelmina, who was working Willie, wishing Willie's wealth, Winona Ward, who was Willie's well-wisher, watched wearily, wretchedly wondering whether Willie would wed Wilhelmina. Winona would wildly welcome whatever would work Wilhelmina's wishes, which was wicked! Wishes (with works) will whiles work wonders.

While Willie as walking with Wilhelmina, Winona worried with worldly wisdom, warily watched Wilhelmina's wily ways, wishing wishes which would wither Wilhelmina's weeds, were wrong wishes worth while. While Willie wooed, Wilhelmina waxed wan with woful weeping, wondering why Willie was wasting whole weeks walking, whereas wedding was what Wilhelmina wanted!

Well, Willie was wistfully watching Winona, who, with woman's wiles, when Willie would wend Winona's way, would wear white, woolly wear, wheedle Willie, who was willing, with wonderful warbling, wittingly warning Willie, "Widow's weeds won't wash!" Well, Winona wanted Willie without wealth! Wilhelmina wanted wealth with Willie! Wilhelmina's weeping ways were woefully wrong, while Winona's winsome ways won, without winking. Whoop!—Judge.

Tommy's Reproof.

The minds of the young idea are mostly taken up with the topic of the day—baseball, at present.

Tommy's mother was bouncing baby on her knee, muttering the usual fond, foolish remarks, while Tommy was trying not to listen.

"O-oh, little wee petsy-westy!" babbled his mother. "Mumsy's and daddy's little darling! Um's precious, um is! Mumsy wouldn't sell oo for a hundred thousand dollars!"

"Oh, mother!" said Tommy, reproving-ly. "Why, Pittsburgh only paid $22,500 for Marty O'Toole!"

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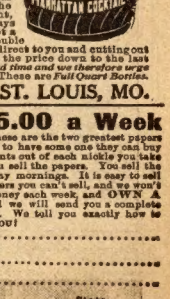

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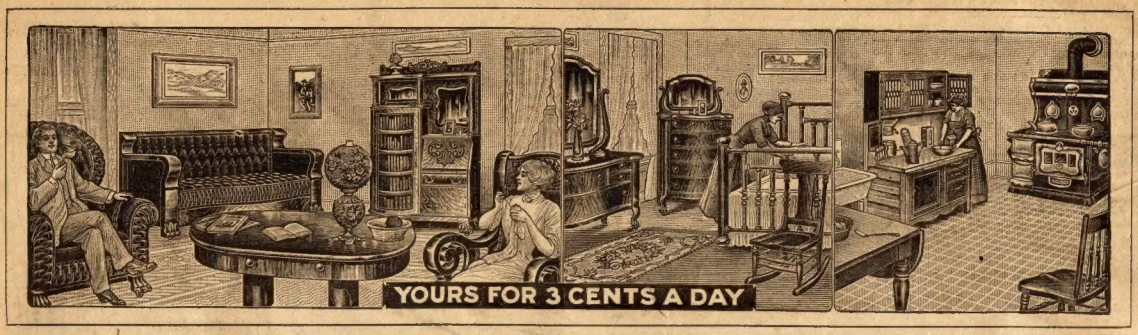

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